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What We Believe

Studies in Christian Doctrine

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TO

Bishop Warren Akin Candler, D.D., LL.D.

GREAT PREACHER AND ABLE DEFENDER
OF THE FAITH ONCE GIVEN IN
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

RELIGION is the life of man in his superhuman relations; that is, in his relation to the Power that produced him, the Authority that is over him, and the unseen Being with whom he is capable of communion. This unseen Being, this Authority, and this Power are one, in the good God and Father, whom it is eternal life to know; but this is a last religious truth for man rather than a first, and until this comes religion is incomplete, one-sided, and more or less misleading. But religion is always the life and experience of man as a being who is dependent upon power, answerable to authority, and adapted to commune with the unseen spiritual reality.—*William Newton Clark.*

As Christ is the center of Christianity, and we get at Christ most directly through the Bible, it is evident that the Bible must be our chief source and the test by which all that calls itself Christian must be judged . . . But, though the Bible is the chief, it is not the only source of Christian theology. A true Christian revelation, while centering in Christ, includes all the light that has been shed by him upon the life of men; so, with the Bible, theology must make room among its sources for all utterances of the Christian spirit which are the result and evidence of this wider influence. Most important among these are the creeds in which, from time to time, the Church has made formal confession of her faith, and the systems on which she has tried to relate her convictions to contemporary thought and to justify the Christian claim before the bar of reason.—*William Adams Brown.*

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to supply a series of non-technical studies of the fundamental doctrines of our Christian faith for persons who have neither the time nor the inclination to make an extensive study of the subject. All Christians ought to have a definite idea of the things most surely believed among us. This is especially true in these times when there are so many religious fads and strange notions about religion.

The Apostles' Creed is made the basis of our approach. It is the most ancient and universal formula of our faith. For a great number of Christians it constitutes the central part of the baptismal covenant and is used by many Churches as a part of the public worship by the congregation. If anyone should ask "what mean ye by these things?" we ought to fulfill the apostolic injunction "to give answer to every man who asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."

Such an answer ought to be biblical. The great facts come from the word of God. Our doctrines are based upon divine revelation and owe their authority to this fact, and Jesus Christ is the supreme fact in this revelation. It is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ. For this reason Christian doctrine builds on and from the Bible. It is now and always true that there is a wonderful light in God's word. It is of the utmost importance that the Bible references in this book should be constantly used.

Our Christian faith is a reasonable view of the world and of God. It is true that faith has higher range than the knowledge of this world, but it is not entirely independent of it. It is necessary that faith and knowledge work together. God should not be shut out of any part of life, least of all the mind he gave us. Christian doctrine is simply our endeavor to express in a reasonable way the great truths of religion; to state these truths in the light of all our knowledge of the world and of men. Our faith and

our thinking must be blended, making harmony between mind and heart. So these studies have been written in the light of the larger experience of our life and of the desire to express our best thoughts concerning the truths that mean most for the life that now is and that which is to come.

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INTRODUCTION

MOST heartily do I welcome this little book. I agree thoroughly with John Wesley in his contention that religion is primarily a matter of experience and not of creed. "There be some well meaning persons," he says, "who aver that if they have not clear views of these capital doctrines—the fall of man, justification by faith, and the atonement made by the death of Christ and of his righteousness transferred to them—they can have no benefits from his death. I can in no wise affirm this. Indeed, I do not believe it. I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas. I believe he respects the goodness of the heart more than the clearness of the head; and that if the heart of a man be filled (by the grace of God and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not cast him into everlasting fire because his ideas are not clear or because his conceptions are confused."

I regard this position as thoroughly biblical and believe that it needs to be specially emphasized just now. For it seems to me that there is a marked tendency on the part of certain religious leaders so to exalt the importance of what Wesley calls "mere opinions" as to incur the danger of diverting attention from the central place of Christ in our religion and from the fact of saving fellowship with him through faith as an assured personal experience. With such an experience, and not with a process of elaborate creed building, did St. Paul begin the Christian life.

And yet creeds have a very important place in the development of Christian character. Having entered into the new life, the thoughtful person finds himself under an intellectual compulsion to seek to develop a theology that will serve as a rational explanation and basis of his experience. This was precisely the method of St. Paul. He began with an experience of vital fellowship with the risen

Lord, and then proceeded in the course of a growing intimacy with him to develop a theology by reflecting upon the nature and meaning of this experience.

The Christian who stops short with regeneration, who does not seek by prayer and study to acquire a consistent body of religious beliefs, is not likely to develop a really triumphant faith or a vigorous and stalwart character or to become an aggressive and useful leader in the work of the Church. A religion that has no definite thought content is almost sure to be spineless and vacillating. I have spoken of Wesley's insistence on primacy of experience rather than of creed. Let it not be inferred, however, that he was one of those who regard one's beliefs as of little importance or that he held his own convictions lightly. On the contrary, no one ever believed more deeply or sought more earnestly to equip his followers with a body of sound doctrine, and the fact that the early Methodists lived so richly and heroically is partly accounted for by the fact that they were so carefully and diligently instructed in the faith.

This book represents an effort to return to the Pauline method and to Wesley's wise example. It is written primarily for those who have committed themselves to the Way and who desire to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. It is not controversial, but positive and constructive. The author seeks to destroy error by implanting truth and to establish young disciples in the faith and build them up in Christ by supplying them with a body of sound doctrine. His style is simple and untechnical, and he speaks in the terms of present-day life and experience. It would be unfair for me to leave the impression that I agree with every statement in Doctor Parker's interpretation of the articles of the Creed, but I do most heartily indorse the great body of his teaching as furnishing just the kind of material that is needed in these times of shallow thinking and intellectual confusion to confirm and enrich the faith of those who are "striving to lay hold of the prize for which Christ has laid hold of them."

E. B. CHAPPELL.

NASHVILLE, TENN.

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PERSONAL SALVATION. *By W. F. Tillett*.....$1 50

A devout and thoroughly orthodox textbook on Christian doctrine from the Methodist point of view.

A STATEMENT OF METHODIST FAITH. *By W. F. Tillett*..... 20

Being a discussion of the place and meaning of the twenty-five Articles of Religion.

THE SYMBOL OF METHODISM. *By H. M. Du Bose*... 1 00

A study of the origin and significance of the standards of belief of Methodism.

THEISM: A SURVEY OF THE PATHS THAT LEAD TO GOD. *By J. J. Tigert*..... 1 25

A philosophic discussion of the evidences of faith.

SOME FUNCTIONS OF A CREED. *By Collins Denny*... 50

Article in the *Methodist Review* for April, 1923.

THE METHODIST ARMOR. *By Hudson*..... 1 00

A plain and practical discussion of what the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, believes and practices.

WHAT EVERY METHODIST SHOULD KNOW. *By George R. Stuart*. Cloth, 60 cents; paper..... 35

Exactly what the title indicates.

WHAT WE PROTEST AGAINST. *By H. Walter Featherstun*. 10

An Epworth League booklet that treats of the essentials of Protestantism.

THE MAIN POINTS. *Brown*..... 1 25

A very clear discussion of the fundamentals of Christian doctrine.

The foregoing list of books is purposely brief, even at expense of omitting several works that are fully equal to those named. It is designed to recommend a few books for the use of readers who desire to give further study to Christian doctrine and related subjects.

The Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost: Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate: Was crucified, dead, and buried [He descended into hell*]: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven: and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost: The Holy Catholic Church: The communion of saints: The forgiveness of sins: The resurrection of the body: And the life everlasting. Amen.

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*This statement is equivalent to "He went into the place of departed spirits." (Acts 2:24, 31; 1 Peter 3:18, 19; 4:6; Eph. 4:9.) It was retained by John Wesley in the Sunday service, but has been omitted from the present Order of Service.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

I. GOD THE FATHER

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—The Inspired Hymn of Creation. Genesis 1:1-2:3.

Monday.—Nature Psalms. Psalms 8, 19.

Tuesday.—Conscience Acknowledges God. Isaiah 1:10-20; Psalm 51.

Wednesday.—Jesus the Revelation of God. John 14.

Thursday.—God the Redeemer. Isaiah 40:1-17, 27-31.

Friday.—God Revealed as Light and Love. 1 John 1:1-2:6; 4:7-21.

Saturday.—Invitation and Motive to Seek the Lord. Isaiah 55; Psalm 63:1-8.

PRAYER

To God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications, that he, rememberng the calamities of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life in which we spend our days, would please to open to us new consolations out of the fountain of his goodness for the alleviating of our miseries. We humbly and earnestly ask that human things may not prejudice such as are divine, so that from the opening of the gates of sense and the kindling of a greater natural light, nothing of incredulity . . . may arise in our minds toward divine mysteries; but rather, O Lord, that our minds, being thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and yet subject to the divine will, there may be given unto faith the things that are faith's, that so we may continually attain to a deeper knowledge and love of thee, who art the Fountain of Light, and dwellest in the Light which no man can approach unto; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Francis Bacon, 1561.)

As the sun is the center of the solar system, so God is the center of Christianity. The foundation truth is the doctrine of God, and Christianity is a power because it is a life in God. The earliest Christian creed begins with the state-

ment, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." It comes to us from the middle of the second century of our era, and is an expansion of the baptismal formula,[1] "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Apostles' Creed states in the simplest way what the Christians of that early day thought were the main articles in their faith. Above all else is the doctrine of God the Father.

God Is Known in Nature

The most certain confidence of the Christian Church is that men may know God. In its simplest and most elemental form this knowledge is derived from the world as created by God. The apostle Paul declares: "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity."[2] As men survey the world about them they are convinced that this world has had a Creator. Everywhere the mind of man finds intelligence in nature. The more we know about the structure of the life about us, whether in the beautiful forms of flowers, or the marvelous effects of life in animals, or in the majestic mechanism of matter organized in manifold forms, the more we perceive the presence of an intelligent Creator.[3] Thus it is that the idea of God is a necessity for the rational souls of men.

Gregory the Great once wrote the following statement of his belief: "If we look attentively enough at outward, material things we are recalled by them to inward, spiritual things. For the wonders of the visible creation are the footprints of our Creator; himself as yet we cannot see, but we are on the road that leads to vision when we admire him in the things that he made. And so we call creative things his footprints, since they are made by him and guide to himself."

Men have also felt a presence in nature that speaks to them of God. This great feeling is described by Wordsworth in the well-known passage from "Tintern Abbey":

"I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

God Is Known in Conscience

In still another way men have felt God's presence in the world in their own souls. Wordsworth speaks of conscience as

"God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world."

To become fully conscious of oneself is almost sure to lead to a sense of deity. For God has not left himself without a witness,[4] and has made all men feel within their own souls, at times, a sense of the divine. The Psalmist declares that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" God has "perfected praise."[5] And among the least of men God has set eternity in the heart.

This sense of God is made very profound through our perception of the difference between right and wrong. The moral law within us argues for the existence of a God to whom everything has moral significance.[6] When human beings become most conscious of the right and the true they become most receptive to a sense of God over all..

God Is Known in Revelation

God is also known to us from his revelation of himself. This is given to us through the minds of inspired prophets and sages, to whom the clear vision of God has been granted by supernatural inspiration. Men like Moses[7] and Isaiah[8] have been permitted to see into the great depths of the Infinite Being and to report to other men what they have found, so that they, too, are led into the knowledge of God made known to prophets and apostles.

Jesus Is the Supreme Revelation

This supreme revelation of himself God has made complete in Jesus Christ, our Lord. In his teachings, and more

especially in his person and his work, God has made himself known to men.[9] This knowledge is real and will endure forever; nor is there any higher knowledge possible to men until mortality shall give way to the life immortal, when we may see him without the intervening veils of flesh and ignorance of our present order.[10]

Three Great Descriptions of God

In the New Testament there are given three great words which are descriptive of God. It is impossible to define God completely. He is too great for definition, but we can express truths about him, and the New Testament has given us some master words by which to approach or come into a knowledge of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. *God is spirit.* Jesus, in his conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, said to her: "God is a spirit."[11] This is the first great aspect of the doctrine of God for us to understand. When we say that God is a spirit, we mean that he is a personal being, in some such sense as we understand ourselves to be persons, only infinitely greater. As a spirit God is not matter or mere physical force, but transcends matter and is above all powers in the universe. As a spirit God possesses intelligence, freedom, and the power to reveal himself; he may make himself known to men, and men may know him. There is communion between God and men, because God as spirit may express himself to other spirits, or persons, though they be less than himself.

2. *God is light.* The second great master word of the New Testament is light. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all."[12] This word light is not a definition of God, but is a descriptive term that suggests to us a great deal about God. First of all, it suggests the fact that all light, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual, comes from him as the rays of the sun illuminate the material earth. God is the source of intelligence; of whatever is real and true. He knows all things. "All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to

do."[13] So the mysteries of all nature are immediately known to God. For him there are no mysteries; he knows all things. Light is also the symbol of righteousness, or purity. God is absolute in his holiness. There is no confusion or uncertainty or wrong in him. He is morally perfect, hence the light of moral truth originates in him and shines from him. God is also light, because he is the source of all spiritual perception. He illuminates the great depths of the human heart and answers the cry of the spirit of man as he reaches out after the unseen and the unknown God.[14]

3. *God is love.* The third great New Testament word for God is love.[15] This is the very heart of Christianity. To say that God is love is to say the last thing concerning him in his relationship to all beings. Love is the outgoing of one person to other persons, seeking to bless and seeking a response. Love, then, is the expression of the very essence of God. He is love in his own self-sufficient existence. But this cannot be defined in mere words; it must be revealed in character and in action. So it is that when man comes into immediate communion with God, he discovers that love in God is supreme.

God the Father

Jesus used the word "Father" as his favorite term for God. He speaks of "Your Heavenly Father,"[16] and of "My Father,"[17] or "The Father."[18] So that the idea of fatherhood is the one through which Jesus sought to express his conception of God. Of course he uses this familiar term in the highest sense, but includes the needs of lowly men in his teaching.[19] We may observe a few special things included in this sacred title.

1. God as father is the source of all things. He is "the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." By his own will he has brought into being the universe, but in a very special sense he is the father of men and angelic spirits, because they can respond to him as his children in knowledge, obedience, and love.

2. As father God is the caretaker and provider for all our needs. This means that he rules over the incidents of life so as to protect and train and develop his children. He

provides for the ordinary interests of life by giving to man the opportunity to discover in the earth its riches, find out its treasures of knowledge, and to enjoy its beauty.

3. God is our father inasmuch as he has made us like himself, in that he has given us free wills, so that we can choose our courses and give ourselves at will. And, above all things, he is our father in his desire that we shall give ourselves to him and find our joy and strength in his fellowship. It is in this deep spiritual sense that the fullest meaning of fatherhood is found. As John exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God."[20] God reveals his fatherhood by taking us into companionship with himself and inviting us to share his life forever.

The Divine Attributes

1. *Omnipotence.* The Creed affirms of God our Father that he is almighty. This means that he has sufficient resources for every life, for every need, and the perfect fulfillment of his own designs. He can make all things work together for good to them that love God.[21] This may take time, for God does not constrain any of his creatures, but moves so that they will act from their own wills. He does not use his almightiness to coerce, but to bring to pass his plans and purposes so as to achieve the moral ends of life. So the Christian is confident that no good thing will God withhold from man's necessity.[22]

2. *Eternity.* God's almightiness involves his timelessness. "The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."[23] There is no limit to his existence; he inhabits eternity.[24] And so the souls of men may rest in the assurance that God is not the creature of a day. There is stability, there is purpose, there is strength, there is hope, there is security, in the heart of him whose trust is in the changeless God. This gives us inspiration. We know that his plans will yet carry, and that there will yet come the peace out of the storm and order out of disorder and an eternal home unshadowed by doubt and sin, giving to God's children the secret of strength and undying service.

3. *Omnipresence.* Another great aspect of God's being is his omnipresence. He not only is timeless, inhabiting eternity; he is also present everywhere. The Psalmist says: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I take my bed in sheol, behold, thou art there."[25] This means that there is no time nor place where men cannot find God. This is a very important aspect of the fatherhood. If there were such a thing as getting to a place where God could not be found, then it would be as though he did not exist. But the great comfort of the Christian idea of God is that he is near every one of us, and "in him we live, and move, and have our being."[26] Tennyson has expressed this idea in the "Higher Pantheism":

> "Speak thou to him, for he hears,
> And spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer is he than breathing,
> And nearer than hands and feet."

It is this thought of God's immediate presence with us that makes religion a reality. Because our God is near, we can enter into our closet and "pray to our Father, which seeth in secret, and our Father which seeth in secret can reward us openly."[27] So men may worship him in the valley or on the mountain top, on the seashore or in simple church and the glorious cathedral. All places may become sacred, even as the desert, where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush;[28] or the cleft of the rock where he spoke to Elijah in the still, small voice;[29] or the temple courts, where he appeared to Isaiah;[30] or the Damascus road, on which he became manifest to Saul of Tarsus.[31]

4. *Omniscience.* We have already referred to the fact that God knows all things. In his fatherly character this knowledge is related to us in a very special manner. It brings with it the fact that he understands us, and that it is an understanding filled with sympathy; a knowledge of our weakness and a knowledge of our needs, which brings into our lives his sympathetic care. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."[32] This includes our human perplexity, because we are op-

pressed with our ignorance; we know so little, and our lives are hedged in with problems which we cannot explain. So the thought that God knows all enables us to rest in his high knowledge and so abide in peace because of his perfect understanding of all things.

How to Find God

Often the question is asked, "How may I find God, my Father?"[33] A very earnest woman in trouble asked a Christian friend this question. She was filled with doubt. The answer was: "Act upon the basis that there is a good and gracious God, and you will find him." Donald Hankey, a Christian soldier who lost his life in the World War, said: "True religion is betting one's life that there is a God." He meant that faith is venturing your life upon the living God, his goodness, his mercy, and acting as God would have one act. When we are at our best or in our greatest need, a voice within us inclines us toward him, to seek him, and to commit ourselves to him. And when we do this we shall surely find him. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."[34] The first step toward the knowledge of God is to act on this primary conviction, and this will lead to a deeper knowledge and a growing experience. For the knowledge of God is the realizing of God's life within the soul. To find him, we must forsake all evil, for evil is a denial of him, and desire him with all our heart.

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[1] Matthew 28:19. [2] Romans 1:20. [3] Isaiah 40:26; 42:5. [4] Acts 14:15-17. [5] Psalm 8:2. [6] Psalm 19:1, 7. [7] Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Exodus 3:4-6. [8] Isaiah 6:1-4; Micah 2:1-4. [9] John 14:6-10. [10] 1 John 3:2. [11] John 4:23, 24. [12] John 8:12; 1 John 1:5. [13] Hebrews 4:12. [14] Psalm 18:28; Proverbs 20:27. [15] 1 John 4:8. [16] Matthew 6:32. [17] John 14:2, 21. [18] John 16:27. [19] Matthew 6:26. [20] 1 John 3:1. [21] Romans 8:28. [22] Psalm 84:11. [23] Deuteronomy 33:27. [24] Isaiah 57:15. [25] Psalm 139:7, 8. [26] Acts 17:28. [27] Matthew 6:6. [28] Exodus 3:2. [29] 1 Kings 19:11-13. [30] Isaiah 6:1. [31] Acts 9:3-6. [32] Matthew 6:32. [33] Job 23:3. [34] Hebrews 11:6.

Questions for Class Use

1. Can you think of some beginnings of a creed in the New Testament? (See note on the Creed.)

2. What is the purpose of the Creed, and what authority has it for our belief? (See note on the Creed.)

3. What three things does the Creed affirm concerning God?

4. Does the Bible recognize any need of proving the existence of God?

5. By what three ways may we come to knowledge of the existence of God?

6. What is the supreme revelation of God?

7. What three facts of the nature and character of God are revealed to us?

8. What do we mean by God's Fatherhood?

9. What are the four chief attributes of God; and how are we thereby affected?

10. How would you describe the venture of faith in which one may find God?

II. THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—A Prophetic Announcement of the Messiah. Isaiah 11 and 12.

Monday.—Messianic Psalms. Psalms 2 and 110.

Tuesday.—The Word Made Flesh. John 1:1-17; 1 John 1:1-3.

Wednesday.—The Birth of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:18-2:6; Luke 1:46-55.

Thursday.—An Early Christian Interpretation. Hebrews 2:1-18.

Friday.—St. Paul's Doctrine of Christ. Colossians 1:9-29.

Saturday.—One of the Days of the Son of Man. Mark 2:1-28.

PRAYER

Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we, being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

The Place of Christ in the Creed

It is interesting to note the following facts about the Apostles' Creed. It contains one hundred and eight words.[1] Seventy words are used to express the Christian belief concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.[1] The Creed as a whole contains eight specific heads of belief, but the article relating to Jesus Christ our Lord refers to eleven distinct facts concerning him.[1] Most of these affirm something concerning his humanity, as the nature of his birth, his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. All this goes to show how profoundly the early Christians

felt that the doctrine and person of Jesus Christ were central in their faith. And so it has ever been true through the Christian centuries that the question of our Lord's nature has been vital in theological thinking, and in Christian experience the secret of a vital faith.

The article of the Apostles' Creed affirms first belief "in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." This is followed by a series of clauses in which the human aspects and experiences of his life find statement. The reason for this large emphasis is due, however, to the truth that both aspects of the person of Christ have a vital relation to Christian experience.

Jesus Christ Is Unique

From the very earliest days of Christianity living men have felt that Jesus Christ was unique. They have felt that in him they found God as well as the perfect exemplar of humanity. Tennyson expresses what higher natures have ever felt in the presence of Christ:

> "Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood thou:
> Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours to make them thine."[2]

No man can yield his will to anyone less than divine, but it has so come to pass that men have never felt it incongruous to yield their wills to Christ. The mystery of his person is that he claimed and has received this high homage of multitudes of the noblest spirits of our race. What is it that gives to Jesus this supremacy? He, himself, said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."[3] Our hearts are bound to Jesus, and we are enabled to realize the saving power of his endless life because he is the way by which we come to God. "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."[4] It is by virtue of what he is that he holds his place in the religious life of Christendom. His words are great, but men are bound to the present, living Christ, and do not simply follow as scholars in the school of religious thinking.[5] We cannot

find the seam that marks the distinction between the manhood and the divinity. His character is so perfectly blended and the holiest manhood is so interlaced with the wonderful revelations of Godhead that he is one, the one person whom we trust and whom we adore.

The Son of Man

In the study of the significance of his person, it is well, first of all, to consider the words Jesus used about himself. First, he often referred to himself as "The Son of Man."[6] This title was a favorite designation of himself and occurs frequently in the Gospels. It is evident that Jesus used this designation in a very special sense. No doubt, the title was derived from Jewish sources,[7] but he gave to it a special and fuller meaning. It affirms, first, all his true humanity. He had a real human nature.[8] He was born of a woman,[9] he grew as a child,[10] he came to maturity as a man,[11] he felt weariness and hunger and thirst,[12] he was tempted and he prayed.[13] In this he was a genuine brother of our race; and the most genuine manhood was his because it was not tainted or spoiled by sin.[14] But this title means more than simply manhood. It means that he sustained a peculiar relation to the human race. He was the first, or the head. The New Testament calls him "the first born among many brethren."[15] He was identified with our life as its most perfect representative. In him the highest human experiences took place.

The Messiah Saviour

But the title, Son of Man, involved more than perfect manhood. It was a way of claiming to be the Messiah and the Saviour of men. This found definite expression in Jesus's repeated statement: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."[16] He said concerning his Messianic character and mission that the Scripture was fulfilled, because "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim the release of the captive, and to restore the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them

that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[17] Jesus reveals his Messianic character chiefly as a friend of sinners. His interest in and sympathy with lost men dominated his ministry. He mingled with publicans and sinners, and he looked upon his saving mission as the most significant thing in his Messianic character.[18]

The Messiah and His Kingdom

Jesus revealed his consciousness of being the Messiah by presenting himself as the center and power of "the kingdom of God."[19] Indeed, the phrases "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven," are often on his lips in sermon or parable and show that he looked upon himself as the center of that kingdom. He is its founder and the source of its spiritual power. It is his kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of truth, the great community of all who have accepted him as Saviour and Lord. "The general assembly and Church of the firstborn are enrolled in heaven;"[20] both resident in this world and in the world beyond. It is even more than this, it includes principalities and powers, for he is now the center of the moral universe.[21] So we see that the Church of the living God owes its life to Christ. To Pilate he said: "My kingdom is not of this world;" and "I am come into this world that I should bear witness unto the truth."[22] His kingdom is the kingdom of eternal spiritual truth.

The Divinity of Christ Central

The divinity of Jesus Christ holds the preëminent place in the system of Christian truth. Jesus indicated this by his repeated use of the expression, "The Son of God," with reference to himself.[23] And as he uses this term, "Son," men have always experienced a sense of the divine. The very characters of God are his. He was sinless, he was holy, he was love incarnate in such a sense as none other among the sons of men have been.[24] It is this view of his character which has been the power of God unto salvation in Christian history. It has been the preaching of the divine Christ that has led men to repent and has inspired

them with faith unto salvation. Jesus has mastered his people because they have found in him not merely man, but God.

The Word the Revealer

The Gospel of John uses another striking term with reference to Jesus. He is called "The Word." "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[25] The Church has ever felt that in these high terms lay the secret of the presence and power of Jesus Christ. He was God manifest in the flesh.

When we speak of Christ as "The Word" and "The Son," we mean that the very being of God has entered into human experience; but it is God, known as the eternal Son, himself existing before the world began to be, yet in due time entering by means of human life into the affairs of men. The Son of God was the prototype of what men ought to be. Let us remember man's kinship to God. We are told that "He made man in his own image and in his own likeness."[26] This means his moral image, with a spirit capable of knowing and loving God; capable of understanding and entering into fellowship with God. Thus it is in God that men live and move and have their being. Though men have sunk very far by reason of sin and unbelief, they were originally made for God and to be his children. So there is in the being of God a life to which our life can be compared; a life which we can find and, in part, possess. There is in God the pattern, or likeness, of what men ought to be. And this pattern was the eternal Word, or Son, who in the fullness of time entered human life by birth and revealed himself in the divine glory of a life lived as God would have it lived.[27]

This is the only way in which God could perfectly reveal himself to us. We may feel his presence in nature, in all the glory of his creation, but somehow we do not there find righteousness and love and all the moral fullness of what God must be. Nature imperfectly reflects him. In order to reach us, it became him to enter our life and live as a man among the sons of men.

The characters of God are moral and spiritual, and they

must find expression through the instrumentality of the person. And so God has revealed himself perfectly in the supreme Person, and all our ideas of him become clearer when we see his character and his will reflected in the perfection of a human life conformed to his perfect will. And as men become acquainted with Christ, they learn to know God in him and reproduce in their own lives the godlike qualities revealed in Christ. When Jesus says, "I am the way,"[28] he plainly means that he reveals God's way of being and living. We see there what the mind of God is, hence we are led to realize that he is divine.[29] Because he is the eternal Son, he has the power to awaken in our hearts the sense of the divine presence. He leads us out to worship and to trust, and to give to him all the service that could be rendered as to God.

The Struggle of Those Who Strive after Salvation

The divinity of Jesus Christ is the secret of strength to struggling sinners. He has made us realize that God is near, and not far from any of us. God, who is veiled behind the mysteries of life and nature, is felt to be near when we approach him in Jesus Christ, his Son. He is no shadowy and distant governor, enthroned far above us, but one who came in a life something like our own. He has made us feel that here is a pledge of divine help in a world where men need supernatural strength. There is not only a sense of the nearness of God in Jesus, but there is also a sense of the unimpeachable truthfulness of his character. No man who has seen and felt the power of Jesus Christ can doubt that somewhere an essential and eternal goodness reigns. For Jesus is the living witness that somehow, somewhere goodness prevails; and though we may be beset by manifold temptations and sorrows, yet we know that God lives, and all will be well. Jesus, as the revelation of God to men, has made them to feel that they could triumph over their sins and accomplish the will of God.[30] The world has had ideals a plenty, but only Jesus Christ has brought to man the power of the victorious life over sin

and death.[31] We know that he is divine, because he enables us to follow in his footsteps and enter into the divine life.

The acceptance of Jesus Christ as divine answers all the problems of our life. As Robert Browning states it,[32]

"The acknowledgment of God in Christ, accepted by thy reason,
Solves for thee all questions in the earth and out of it
And has thus far advanced thee to be wise."

He satisfies the mind in revealing God as truth. He satisfies the conscience by bringing the divine power of the forgiveness of sins. He satisfies the heart by revealing God's love for us and in us. He supplies us with a divine leader, whom we may follow, and, accepted by the heart, we find him as a presence, though unseen, yet ever near. He brings into the spiritual life a companionship and a fellowship that fill with hope, with inspiration, and with purpose.

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[1] Including the clause omitted from our "Order of Service," "he descended into hell." [2] In Memoriam. [3] John 14:6. [4] Hebrews 1:3. [5] Matthew 11:28; John 5:39, 40. [6] Matthew 16:28; Acts 7:56. [7] Daniel 7:13. [8] Hebrews 2:14 [9] Galatians 4:4. [10] Luke 2:52. [11] Luke 3:23. [12] John 4:6. [13] Luke 4:2ff. [14] Hebrews 4:15. [15] Romans 8:29. [16] Luke 19:10. [17] Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18, 19. [18] Matthew 9:9-13. [19] Luke 17:20. [20] Hebrews 12:22-24. [21] Colossians 1:15-18. [22] John 18:36, 37. [23] Matthew 16:16, 17. [24] Hebrews 7:25-28. [25] John 1:1, 14. [26] Genesis 1:26, 27; Psalm 8:4, 5. [27] Galatians 4:4-6. [28] John 14:6 with Galatians 1:15, 16. [29] Philippians 2:5, 8, 9-11. [30] Philippians 4:13. [31] 1 John 5:1, 1; Corinthians 15:57, 58. [32] Paracelsus.

Questions for Class Use

1. In what proportion does the Creed deal in the doctrine of Christ?

2. As the foundation of belief is in the doctrine of God, how would you account for the devotion of so large a part to Christ?

3. Can you state in order (1) the affirmations of the Creed concerning the divine nature of Jesus, and (2) concerning his manifestation in the flesh?

4. In what way does Christ now affect, and has he always affected, earnest souls as they contemplated life?

5. By what term did Jesus commonly refer to himself, and what was the significance of this term?

6. In what way did Jesus show that he regarded himself as the expected Messiah of the Jews?

7. What is the significance of the term "Word" as used of Christ by John?

8. How is the divinity of Christ proved in experience?

9. Apart from his divinity, how much would Christ mean to the world?

10. How does the Divine Christ answer the complex problems of life?

III. THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Some Old Testament Types. Exodus 12:3-17; Leviticus 16:15-28.

Monday.—A New Testament Interpretation of the Older Institution. Hebrews 9.

Tuesday.—When the Full Meaning of Vicarious Sacrifice Came upon the World. Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

Wednesday.—The Dying Psalm of Him Who Bore Our Sins. Psalm 22, with Matthew 27:46.

Thursday.—Our Lord's Lessons of the Cross. Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 9: 30-32; Matthew 20:20-28; John 12:1-8.

Friday.—Paul's Great Argument. Romans 5:6-21; Galatians 2:20, 21.

Saturday.—Rejoicing in Christ's Salvation. Ephesians 1:1-14.

PRAYER

O Father Eternal, we thank thee for the new and living way into Thy presence made for us in Christ; the way of trust, sincerity, and sacrifice. Beneath his cross we would take our stand, in communion with his Spirit would we pray, in fellowship with the whole Church of Christ we would seek to know thy mind and will.

We desire to know all the fullness of Christ, to appropriate his unsearchable riches, to feed on his humanity whereby thou hast become to us the bread of our inmost souls and the wine of life, to become partakers of thy nature, share thy glory, and become one with thee through him.

Give unto us fellowship with His sufferings and insight into the mystery of his cross, so that we may be indeed crucified with him, be raised to newness of life, and be hidden with Christ in thee.

We desire to make thankful offering of ourselves as members of the body of Christ; in union with all the members may we obey our unseen Head, so that the body may be undivided, and thy love, and healing power, and very self may be incarnate on the earth in one holy universal Church. Amen. (W. E. Orchard.)

LATER I will treat specifically and more fully the doctrines of the Christian life—the forgiveness of sins, the

new birth, and the new life in Christ. These doctrines and the experimental demonstration of them grow out of the saving word of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has its center in his crucifixion and reaches its climax in the resurrection. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,"[1] pointing to his death as the climax of his redeeming work. Paul tells us that "we have our redemption through his blood; the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace."[2] Not only so, but our greatest hymns point to the cross of Christ. One need only mention "Rock of ages, cleft for me," and "My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary," as illustrations of this truth. Our greatest preaching has been concerning the cross. The Christian preacher's throne of power is founded on the atoning work of the Son of God. He wields his greatest influence when he can sincerely point men to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."[3]

It is customary for theologians to refer to the saving work of our Lord as the atonement. There have been various theories or explanations of the atonement set forth by different schools of religious thinkers. Some of these theories have been greatly modified, and each new age needs to consider the great doctrine under the conditions of its own time. The changes that have taken place in Christian thought have always lost power whenever the great fact of Christ's redeeming work has been given second place. It will always be necessary for Christian people to think their way through the meaning of our Lord's wonderful life and vicarious death, because they find in him the hope and the assurance of eternal life. No theory can sound the depths of redeeming grace, but we can find certain clear ideas about the cross of Christ and its relation to our sinful lives that will give definiteness to our faith and thereby enrich our experience of the grace of God

Atonement or Reconciliation

The word "atonement" is used to express the reconciliation that Christ brings between sinning men and a holy

God against whom they have sinned.[4] It is an at-one-ment, or a bringing together in the fellowship of peace and love of the guilty sinner and his Heavenly Father. Hence the great word here is "reconciliation." As Paul expresses it: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."[5] Hence the primary call of the gospel is Paul's entreaty: "As though God was entreating by us, we beseech you, on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."[5]

In order to grasp the idea of reconciliation through Christ, it is, first of all, necessary to realize the nature of the cause producing estrangement between God and man. We cannot understand the work of reconciliation unless we have some idea of the cause and the nature of the estrangement. This brings us at once to the fact of sin. It is on account of sin that man needs to be reconciled to God. Sin has created the problem; hence the New Testament states that Jesus in his saving work had to deal with sin. "He was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."[6] Again it is said: "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree."[7] "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."[8] The Saviour in redeeming men had to deal with the problem of sin. Paul tells us that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[9] What does he mean by the curse of the law? It is the judgment that God's holy nature has pronounced upon wickedness and sin of every form. It includes the wickedness and the evil results consequent upon the wickedness in the world. It is seen in the spiritual death that results from evil. Sin brings on more sin; it contains within itself the seed of its own perpetuity and of self-destruction.

The Curse of the Law.

The curse of the law upon evil is seen in the confusions and evils that overcome human society, both in its social and individual aspects. There is intense selfishness, the corruption and perversion of human nature, the degrada-

tion of its passions and its powers. There are disobedience and lawlessness toward God and toward man, there are cruelty and hardness of heart, insincerity, the slavish conceit of the Pharisees, and the hot antagonism of the worldly-minded against God. All this brings forth spiritual death. It involves the judgment of God upon sin and the impenitent sinner and points the sinner more and more to the deepening consequence of his own thoughts and actions.

The Sinner Identified with His Sin

The principal manifestation of the power of sin in human life is seen in the following facts: There is a sense of guilt. Men feel they are under condemnation, sometimes for specific wrong deeds or thoughts, sometimes it is a sense of condemnation for life as a whole, sometimes there is a sense of the wrath of God; but the main characteristic is the consciousness that right is against the sinner. There is a mysterious law of his own being that condemns him and deprives him of peace with God and his own soul.

The awakened sinner feels himself so completely identified with his own evil thoughts and deeds that he does not see how he can be separated from his guilty past.[10] Even though the world may ignore our wrongdoings when they are known or in case they are never known, still conscience feels the association of the past that cannot be eradicated. Even in the case of sins committed in society, that society cannot be dissociated from the sinner's consciousness. The guilt of sin is an overshadowing sense of permanent association with the evil done; it cannot be shaken off. No human power can make it as though it were not, and no morally awakened soul can rest in the memory of violated conscience.

Another characteristic of the effect of the sinful life is the power it has of preventing goodness.[11] The sinner often becomes conscious of a strange restraint. When he would do good, he does it not. There is something about guilt that paralyzes action; it makes the heart hard. It is like an inner disease that stops the growth of the tree. Some

insect or worm is boring in its central sap, the leaves begin to turn, the tree is dying at the center. So sin cuts off the soul from its vital fellowship with God, and the greatest penalty is that God is shut out of his life. There is a universal consciousness that a man cannot atone for his sins. Men make all sorts of efforts to do so; there is a profound instinct in every moral nature truly awakened, to try to undo the past, to pay back and restore right relations. All religions are bound with the idea of a needed atonement, and conscience when most awake feels its utter inability to make a sufficient reparation to God or man or self for having done evil.

It appears from all this that the two most noted effects of sin are expressed in the word "guilt," on the one hand, describing responsibility and a sense of condemnation. On the other hand, sin is not only guilt; it is corruption, impurity, the power of evil working in the soul. In order for a sinner to be saved, his guilt must be taken away and the corruption cleansed from his life. As the hymn puts it:

> "Be of sin the double cure,
> Save from wrath and make me pure."

The Judgment of God.

The cause of these consequences of evil is the judgment of God against sin. Sin is so great an evil that a holy God can only condemn it. And so he has planted in man, in his body, mind, and spirit, the most terrible consequences of sin. Crime, war, suffering, disease, chaos, loss of peace, and guilty conscience pursue him. These are God's judgment against it, not an arbitrary thing, but a natural thing, because sin is sin and God cannot but be against it. It is the eternal conflict between holiness and evil. It may be at times that we do not see these terrible consequences of evil; they are hidden from our eyes. And there are many things in society to restrain the worst public manifestation of wrong. God's Spirit and Christian men are engaged in a war of suppression, but it only hides; it does not change the nature of sin, and the judgment of God must deal with it.

Now, the great question in the salvation of the sinner is

the removal of his guilt and his deliverance from the power of evil. It is this that Jesus Christ came to do. He came to bring pardon and to deliver from the consequences of sin in this world and all worlds. The sinner is unable to do either. He cannot atone for his sins, neither can he emancipate himself from their thralldom. He not only does what is wrong, but he is inhibited from doing the good he ought to do.

The Need of a Mediator

The sinner needs a mediator, one through whom he may come into fellowship with God. His sense of guilt prevents his approach to the Father of mercies. Christ comes; he is the mediator, assuring him of God's love and deep concern for the souls of the worst of men. The idea of mediation runs all through our lives. This is the very life of prayer, for example. To pray is to intercede. We intercede for one another. We bring to bear our faith in behalf of others in a merely human sense. Now in a still more profound sense Christ is the mediator for sinners; he brings to bear spiritual power; he brings into the very nature of God himself an influence and a power that brings unto the earth a blessing to the individual sinner. Now we wonder what is the nature of this marvelous influence that Jesus exercises upon us and in our behalf. The power of Christ's influence in the salvation of men is in a twofold fact that he is both God and man. He shares our nature and he is essentially divine. Because of his wondrous nature and character, Christ has introduced into the moral world the supreme power of personal influence. "Wherefore, also he is able to save to the utmost those that draw near to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."[12] Now hold this idea fast: The secret of the atonement, or reconciliation in Christ, is in this great fact of his interceding power. He can approach God, and he can approach us in a way in which no other person in the universe can. On the one hand he represents God in his divine nature; on the other, he represents man in his human nature.[13]

Bearing the Sins of Many.

We may now consider some of the things that Jesus, the mediator, has done and is doing to save us from our sins:

Jesus made atonement for sinful men by magnifying the law of God.[14] The law pronounced universal condemnation upon sin because of its evil. The law made sin its own penalty, so that sin begets sin, and sin becomes more exceeding sinful. The law is the recoil of God's holy nature from evil. Jesus magnified the law by his life and death of holy obedience. Where men transgressed the law, he sustained it; where men were disobedient to the Heavenly Father's holy love, he was perfect in his obedience. Jesus sustained righteousness by revealing the sinfulness of sin. It was necessary for the world to realize how sinful evil was. It took more than human repentance to make this clear, but Christ revealed the sinfulness of sin by entering into human life and letting sin strike him. By living among men and trying to do them good, seeking to bring them to a knowledge of God, he exposed himself to the evil world and the kingdom of darkness, and it struck at him with the venom of a serpent; the weight of sin was pressed upon him. Though he had no sin himself, he bore the shame, the hatred, the vileness, and the condemnation of sin. "He suffered, the just for the unjust."[15] It was a revelation of the appalling depth of evil. And he bore all this because he *became one with us*. He entered our nature and became subject to the law of our life, and in doing this he was exposed to the suffering of his holy nature under God's judgment upon evil. Hence the sufferings of Christ were not only a magnifying of God's holy law, they were also a revelation to man of the depth of his own sin. In truest penitence, as well as in strongest faith, men are sure in some way to connect, almost to identify, the suffering Saviour with themselves. Now, our Lord's atoning death for us comes in right here. We have failed in magnifying righteousness and holiness; humanity has brought evil into the world; Christ has entered into the world of sin and by his infinitely holy nature and perfect obedience to the Father's will he has arrested the power of evil and atoned for the sin of the world.[16]

The Death of the Mediator Secures Repentance.

In the next place, the perfect life and death of Jesus atone for sin by leading men to true repentance. Nothing so deepens in men the sense of sin and leads them to a hearty repentance of it as the contemplation of what Christ has done for them. Now, the reason of this is in this fact, that in the cross of Christ there is revealed God's wonderful love for a sinning world. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life."[17] The law of God could condemn and does condemn. It is holy, just, and good, and reveals our guilt and sin; but the love of God, revealing himself in suffering love, giving his only-begotten Son, leads us to repentance.[18] Therefore repentance in its deepest and highest sense is secured only through the cross of Jesus. Men do repent who know nothing of the cross; but the deepest, truest, most genuine repentance among sinful men is found only in those who have looked upon the cross and have been moved by it to deepest sorrow for their sins. This also is a part of the reconciling work of Jesus. It is through his grace that sinners are enabled to bring to God a repentance that needs not to be repented of, because they learn through the revelation of a Saviour's love to turn with bitter shame and sorrow from evil to a loving God.[19]

Jesus Christ Delivers from the Power of Sin

In the next place, Christ saves us by delivering us from the power of sin. It would be of little use merely to remit an external penalty if men were left to continue in sin and fall back into old habits and the old outbreak of evil. But Jesus saves us from our sins, not in them. He does this because he has identified himself with the human race, become one of us, and in response to our faith he enters our lives and gives us his power. "Henceforth if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away, all things have become new."[20] The effect of faith in Christ is to bring into the life of the sinner a new motive, a new power. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we

thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."[21]

Now, this power of Jesus, entering our lives through his Spirit, is the guarantee to the believer that he shall be able to resist sin in the future, and the old paralysis of guilt and unbelief is changed and the heart becomes free to serve and to live unto Christ, who died for us. In this way men find deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin, and they pass into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, who has made this possible by his perfect obedience even unto death. He has met the law, he has honored holiness, he has upheld righteousness, he has revealed God's love and awakened penitence and inspired the heart with faith and love. Thus he has brought about a reconciliation between sinful men and a loving Father, against whom "all have sinned."[22]

The great work of our Lord Jesus Christ in atoning for the sin of the world has brought an infinite blessing to the world as a whole. The effects of his coming have brought benedictions even to men who have not repented of their sins, but his saving power can never avail until they by personal faith accept what he has done for them.

It has always been found that the life and power of the Christian religion come by this consciousness of forgiveness mediated to us through the blood of Jesus. Here is joy, here is peace, here is consecration. We come back to our Father's house through the call of his dear Son, who has done great things for us. He has made it possible for all this to come to pass. But all this gracious provision will fail unless we exercise personal faith toward God through Christ.

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
  Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow neet,
  Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
  That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
  Demands my soul, my life, my all."

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[1] John 12:32. [2] Ephesians 1:7. [3] John 1:29, 35. [4] Romans 5:11. [5] 2 Corinthians 5:19. [6] 2 Corinthians 5:21. [7] 1 Peter 2:24. [8] 1 Peter 3:18. [9] Galatians 3:13. [10] Romans 7.24. [11] Romans 7:15. [12] Hebrews 7:25. [13] 1 Timothy 2:5. [14] Romans 3:31. [15] 1 Peter 3:18. [16] Romans 8:3, 4. [17] John 3:16. [18] Romans 2:4. [19] 2 Corinthians 7:10. [20] 2 Corinthians 5:17. [21] 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, [22] Romans 3:23.

Questions for Class Use

1. In hymn, scripture, and preaching, what has been the central truth of salvation? What is this subject theologically designated?

2. What is the meaning of the term atonement? Give one of the more important scripture passages involving the fact of atonement.

3. What are those conditions of privation and estrangement from God by which atonement is made necessary? In what relation do these consequences of sin stand to God?

4. How is it possible for anyone, even Christ, to become a mediator between God and man? Is there any spiritual exercise in which we ourselves engage that throws light upon the fact of mediation?

5. In his mediatorial work, how did Christ bear our sins?

6. In its effect upon sinners themselves, what three things are effected through the mediation of Jesus Christ?

7. What one of the Church hymns, to your mind, best sets forth the fact of atonement?

IV. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—An Old Testament Prophecy of the "Day of the Lord." Isaiah 2:1-22.

Monday.—An Ancient Day of Judgment upon Israel—Symbol of the Ultimate "Day of the Lord." Joel 2:1-17.

Tuesday. –Jesus's Prediction of a "Day of the Lord" —the Final Judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish State. Matthew 24: 1-28, 32-35.

Wednesday.—Jesus's Prophecy in Apocalypse of His Second Coming. Matthew 24:29-31, 36-41.

Thursday.—An Expectation of the Early Church. Acts 1:6, 7, 10, 11; 3:19-26; Revelation 22:7, 10-17, 20.

Friday.—Some Characteristics of the Present Age. (1) Matthew 28:19, 20; (2) Matthew. 24:42-51; 13:24-30; (3) Acts 1:7, 8; 5:13, 32; (4) 2 Timothy 3:1-14.

Saturday.—Cautions against Fanaticism. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17; James 5:7, 8.

PRAYER

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

In the Creed the second coming of Christ is associated only with the judgment of the quick, or those who shall then be alive on the earth, and of the dead, or those who shall shall have died and passed into the middle state. It therefore follows death and precedes the general judgment. To the same effect is the teaching of the Articles of Religion, our confession of faith: "He ascended into heaven and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last

day." (Art. III. Of the Resurrection of Christ.) It is to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that we must look for elaboration of this bare statement.

The central theme of the Bible is the coming or manifestation of the Lord. The great prophets looked forward to a day when God's people could say: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us."[1] They believed and therefore said that Jehovah would make himself known in judgment and in mercy. The time of this revealing is sometimes called the "day of the Lord."[2] It is thought of as a day of judgment upon the wicked and deliverance for his righteous people. It is a period of judgment upon the enemies of God and his servants. It is also a day of salvation in which God's people, being "delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all their days."[3]

Often this future coming is connected with a person: "A king shall reign in righteousness."[4] Sometimes he is referred to as "David's son," one who should sit upon David's throne in a golden age yet to be. He is also designated as a great prophet, like Moses or Elijah.[5] In the book of Isaiah there is a prophecy of a gracious person called the "servant of the Lord." He is sometimes indicated as a great conqueror, but the profoundest conception is his power to save his people through suffering.[6] All these great anticipations are summed up in what is called the Messianic hope, the coming of the Christ, the anointed One of God, who would establish his kingdom and bring salvation among men.

A Future Coming in the New Testament

The New Testament tells the story of the first coming of Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah and our Lord and Saviour. We have an account of the earthy ministry and the work which Jesus did for our redemption and of the first steps taken in the building of his Church. But this is far from all. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is full of anticipation. Corresponding to the Messianic hope of the

earlier dispensation, there is the expectation of the return of Christ. The coming of the Messiah was the central theme of prophecy of the Old Testament; the second coming of Christ is the central theme in the prophecies concerning the kingdom of God in the New Testament.[7]

Jesus made numerous references to his return,[8] and the other New Testament writers are animated by a vigorous faith in his second coming.[9] A number of the most important teachings in the New Testament are associated with the doctrine of his return. The faith of the early Church was greatly invigorated by the expectation of the return of the Lord. It must be true that such an expectation was based upon the Lord's own teaching. He believed it contained something essential to the development of the Christian character and also enfolded vital truths concerning the development of the kingdom of God. Some of the most vital doctrines of the Christian faith are dependent upon the central doctrine of the Lord's future revelation of himself.

The Promise of His Coming

Our Lord's departure from the earth was according to his own predictions. He said that it was expedient for him to go.[10] But he left many things unsettled. The world was far from converted, and the powers of evil seemed to be gaining rather than losing. Accordingly he refers to the future in terms of judgment as well as of salvation. The fact that evil was enthroned called for its overthrow. The Lord's ministry had been full of peril; there seemed to be abundant peril ahead for his followers. The kingdom of God was not yet established. Surely this was not the end, the consummation of the holy kingdom of the Almighty God of righteousness. The forecasts of that day have been vindicated. The world is still subject of powers of evil.[11] Wars and rumors of wars are with us yet.[12] Society is far from being settled. Restlessness and wandering desires mark the course of life, and men still love the world, from which they cannot reap abiding strength and peace. Evidently things are not yet settled. The kingdom of God is

yet to be in fullness. Yet there was a wonderful revelation. The fact of Christ is the hope of the world. The moral splendor and the spiritual strength of Christ showed what God could do. This vision could never pass away. His truth and righteousness are the hope of the world. He said his gospel would win. He never hesitated. He knew that his truth and power would penetrate the souls of men. There would come a day in which his revelation of himself would be complete. Hence the promise of his coming, the incomplete work called for the Master to complete what he had begun. A return of some sort there must be. Because God is God and Christ is Christ a day is coming when the kingdoms of this world shall give way to a kingdom of righteousness, where God's will shall hold undisputed sway.

The Present Age

The interval between Christ's departure and his return is called "this present age." It is referred to in various ways in the New Testament. It is evident that Jesus expected this interval to embrace a considerable length of time. His last words to his disciples were a charge, a commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel making disciples of all the nations and giving them the promise to be with them "unto the consummation of the age."[13] It is characteristic of prophecy that, while it is very sure of the coming of great movements and revelations of the Lord, it is not sure of the time or the exact manner in which these great events in moral history shall take place.[14] The time cannot be determined because it is morally conditioned; it depends upon what men do with reference to the demands and opportunities placed upon them by Almighty God. Therefore the apostle urges men to live so as to hasten the coming of the day of God.

The New Testament indicates certain great characteristics of this age. First, it is an age of militant evangelism. The Church is charged with the preaching of the gospel and leavening the world with the influence of the Christian character. This is the great business of all who are identified with Jesus Christ. But it is an age of conflict. Perse-

cutions, wars, and revolutions would often mingle the titanic powers of evil with the social forces of Christianity, denying and resisting the truth of God.[15]

While the work of the kingdom is going on, the powers of darkness are at work. The householder sows good seed in the field, but the enemy sows tares, and both are found growing together.[16] The parable of the talents teaches the need of diligence in the use of Christ's gifts to his people during the period of his absence.[17] We shall see this state of affairs all along the way to the final consummation. Nineteen centuries of Christian history have passed, yet millions have not heard the gospel message. There is much to be done before all nations will have heard the invitation of Christ.

The second thing to consider in this age is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The commission to preach the gospel was accompanied by the promise to send the Holy Spirit.[18] The gospel age opened with Pentecost. The Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.[19] Christian progress is by means of the Spirit of power. He has taken the place of the visible presence of the Lord. Jesus said: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."[20] The present age is subject to the direction of the Spirit. He is peculiarly manifest in all genuine revivals of religion and the wonderful openings which come for the evangelization of heathen nations.

There is a sense in which it may be said that Jesus has already come. He is present with his people through the Holy Spirit.[21] They have had a sense of his nearness in the work of his kingdom and in their most personal and individual experiences. It is this spiritual presence of the Lord that keeps faith alive in the earth. The early disciples expected an early return of their Master, and scoffers said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."[22] The spiritual presence of Jesus still sustains the faith of his Church, while we

still wait for the day when his victory shall be complete and the heavenly kingdom brings its harvest of redeemed life.[23]

A third characteristic of the present age is its liability to great social upheavals, wars, revolutions, and manifestations of malignant and powerful evil.[24] The early Church was greatly impressed by what Jesus said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. He affirmed that that generation would see an appalling judgment of God upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people.[25] The moral degeneracy and racial fanaticism of the Jews hid the course of true wisdom from their eyes. Jesus said that doom awaited the fag end of the Jewish State. The city fell before the Roman legions in 70 A.D. No doubt many of the early disciples of Jesus confused his words, identifying the fall of Jerusalem with his promise to return.

But Jesus said there shall be wars and rumors of wars. "And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified: for these things must needs come to pass first; but the end is not immediately." So these tumults have come. Civilization has just passed through one of the worst of these upheavals, but the end is not yet.[26]

The New Testament declares there will be a fierce outbreak of evil before the end of the age. It will be marked by a special outbreak of sin and bitter antagonism to God and his Christ. The powers of darkness will resist the forward progress of the kingdom of God with subtlety and vindictive power. It will be the last desperate stand against God in the present world order, the hour of deepest darkness just before dawn, to be followed by the final revelation of the glory and redemptive power of the Son of God.[27] But this does not mean that there shall be no progress in the earth. It is evident that the principles of Christ's gospel are being vindicated more and more and that many entrenched evils are being overwhelmed by a clearer moral judgment among men. Yet the world as a whole is far from evangelized, and there are huge areas of the world's population living in sin. And so long as evil resides in an evil will there may be a fresh outbreak against

all that is good. Men may go backwards for a season. We know that individuals backslide and whole communities suffer from temporary declensions.

The Manner of His Coming

It is important to understand that we cannot describe with precision the manner of Christ's return. No prophecy can outline literally the details of any future manifestation of God.[28] This is illustrated in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The Messiah came in due time, but not in the form of Jewish expectation. Men were looking for the temporal restoration of the throne of David. But Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world."[29] His first coming was a disappointment to many because it was a revelation of spiritual forces. So we cannot safely outline the details of the second coming. The terms in which the prophets represented the Messianic age were pictorial and descriptive; they were fulfilled spiritually and morally rather than literally. The Christ was greater and his work more profound than their thought of him. So the second coming of our Lord will be a far more wonderful revelation of his power than we can now imagine. It will be a complete and universal triumph of Christ in his redeeming power. It will close the present world order. It will be the end: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power."[30] The present world order must give way. Death and the events incident to life in the flesh must be overcome by a life free from the limitations of pain and hunger and separation. Sin also must be utterly conquered and men must come to an experience where they can have the full vision of God and serve him in utter freedom. These things are not impossible in the present order. The coming of Christ will be the transcendent, miraculous outpouring of his power, in which death and corruption shall give way to a state of unbroken fellowship between God and his people. It will be the coming of the kingdom; not merely individual redemption, but the creation of a great society of

redeemed persons gathered around Christ as their center and life.[31]

The Second Coming and the Judgment

The second coming of Christ is connected with the judgment. Paul says, "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ";[32] and Jesus said: "Before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats."[33] When we think of the effect of Christ's presence in his own day, his coming was a judgment. He revealed what was in the hearts of men. His life is an exposure of evil. His coming is inevitably a judgment upon sin. Even now there is a process of separation going on in the world. In the same household we find division, some for Christ and some against him, some living in sin and some victorious through faith.[34] To-day the world is judged by its conformity or lack of conformity to the principles of Jesus Christ. There is a power now separating good from evil. But in the end of the age there will be a final revelation of the holiness and power of Christ which will issue in the final judgment upon impenitent sinners. Evil men and all their works will be judged.[35]

This judgment will vindicate the ways of God with men. At last the purposes of God will be clearly seen. All this will center in the person of the Son of God. The Father has committed judgment to the Son.[36] By his personal moral power he will bring the forces of evil to an end and assign the workers of iniquity to their doom. But there is a greater thing than this. He will reward the righteous; they shall "enter into the joy of their Lord."[37] What this may be we cannot tell. Certainly it will be the fullest fruition of faith and fellowship with God and his redeemed people. It will be the confirmation of all their trust and their assignment to a larger and fuller place of service in the kingdom of God. To the man who improves his talents other talents shall be given, and this means larger and more glorious opportunities for self-expression in service.[38]

Amidst our present surroundings and under the limita-

tions of our earthly experience, it is impossible for us to imagine the scope and character of the service that we shall render in our redeemed and blessed and perfected life of the world to come.

We cannot tell how these things will come to pass, nor can we measure the procedure of the judgment in terms of time. It seems probable that it will be a great climax in which new manifestations and disclosures of God's power and life will be revealed. Not only so on the divine side, but also on ours, for long after death has done its work we shall be among the disembodied hosts and "see him as he is."

The Second Coming and the Resurrection

The New Testament connects the second coming with the resurrection of the dead. The apostle Paul is the great expounder of this doctrine. The resurrection is connected with the life-giving power of the Son of God.[39] His coming will be a manifestation of power such as the world has never seen. This bears out what we have said concerning the revelation of divine power connected with the return of Christ. This will be an epoch or day in which power shall appear in forms and degrees never conceived of in the thoughts of men.[40]

The resurrection body will be a spiritual body, Paul tells us—that is to say, it will be different from our present physical body and adapted to a new and higher form of life.[41] It will be an organ of expression. Just as we express our purposes and interests through the present physical body we shall express our inner life through the resurrection body. This means a rich and full life enjoyed by a vast community of the redeemed. The resurrection body of Jesus may have thus completely transformed by the time of his ascension; at any rate, he is the "firstfruits"; afterwards our bodies of humiliation shall be transformed into the likeness of the body of his glory.[42]

The apostle tells us that Christ's people will be like him.[43] This is the glorious prospect. Just what this means we cannot tell; we have only faith for the future. The imagi-

nation may picture the form of our renewed humanity conformed to the body of Christ's glory, but we cannot do more than imagine here. But we can grasp the meaning of his revelation of power and righteousness. This is the central thing. All will be revealed, and the revelation will be holiness and power, victory and fellowship, fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with the Spirit and with one another.

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[1] Isaiah 25:9. [2] Isaiah 2:12; Joel 2:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:2. [3] Luke 1:74. [4] Isaiah 32:1; Matthew 1:1; 22:42. [5] Deuteronomy 18:15. [6] Isaiah 42:1-4; 63: 1-6; 50:5, 6; 53:1-12. [7] Acts 3:19-21; Revelation 22:12. [8] Matthew 24:29, 30; Mark 13:34-37; John 14:1-3. [9] 1 John 3:2, 3; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7. [10] John 16:7. [11] 2 Timothy 3:1-5. [12] Matthew 24; 6, 7. [13] Matthew 28:19, 20. [14] Matthew 24:36. [15] 2 Timothy 4:2-14; 3:1-4, 12. [16] Matthew 13:24-30. [17] Matthew 25:14-30. [18] Acts 1:8. [19] Acts 2:4. John 14:16, 17; 16:7-11. [20] Matthew 18:20; 28:20. [21] 2 Peter 3:4. [22] 1 Thessalonians 1:10. [23] Matthew 24:6, 7. [24] Matthew 24:6, 7. [25] Matthew 24:33, 35. [26] Mark 13:7. [27] 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. [28] E. g. Isaiah 32:1-8; Micah 4:1-7. [29] John 18:36. [30] 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. [31] Revelation 21:1-11. [32] Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10. [33] Matthew 25:31-33. [34] Matthew 10:34-36. [35] Revelation 20:11-15. [36] John 5:27. [37] Matthew 25:19-23. [38] Matthew 25:28-30. [39] Colossians 3:1-3. [40] 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12. [41] 1 Corinthians 15:44-49. [42] Philippians 3:21. [43] 1 John 3:1, 2.

Questions for Class Use

1. In what ways and with what significance is the term "Day of the Lord" used in the Bible?

2. Does the New Testament teaching concerning the coming of Jesus the Christ fully satisfy the predictions of the Old Testament or the expectations of the New? What especially was Jesus's own teaching? What was the degree of success achieved by Jesus's ministry compared with the ideal foretold?

3. How would you characterize "the present age," and what may be known of the time of its termination? What four characteristics of this "present age" are prominent in the New Testament teaching?

4. Of the manner of Jesus's second coming, what may be inferred from the record of the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies?

5. With what two great final events of the moral and spiritual destiny of the race of men is the second coming of Christ connected and in what way as to time and circumstances?

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Two Old Testament Predictions. Joel 2:28-32; Isaiah 61:1-11. (Compare Luke 4:16-19; Acts 2:14-21.)

Monday.—The Holy Spirit as Related to the Birth of Christ. Luke 1:11-17, 26-35, 67-79; 2:25-28.

Tuesday.—The Comforter, the Other Presence. John 14:15-27.

Wednesday.—The Witness to Christ. John 15:26; 16:5-15.

Thursday.—The Beginning of the Gospel Dispensation. Acts 1:7, 8; 2:1-13.

Friday.—The Apostolic Interpretation of Pentecost. Acts 2:14-36.

Saturday.—The Spirit's Transformations in the New Life. Rom. 8:1-17.

PRAYER

O God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God world without end. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

The Holy Spirit in Creed and Scripture

The third great statement in the Apostles' Creed is the declaration of faith in the Holy Spirit, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." That brings to our attention the language of the New Testament concerning God. He is referred to in a threefold way. For example, we read in the Great Commission: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and lo, I am

with you always, even unto the end of the world."[1] The same trinity is seen in the apostolic benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."[2]

The Spirit of God is referred to many times in both the Old and the New Testament scriptures. In the first chapter of Genesis we read: "And the Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters."[3] And in the last chapter of Revelation it is said: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."[4] And so we may see that the Christian doctrine of God includes a doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit in Jesus's Teaching

We will turn to the words of Jesus and the experience of the Apostolic Church to find out the great teaching on this important and vital theme. In our Lord's last interview with his disciples before he suffered, he gave to his followers this promise: "And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth."[5] The word here translated "Comforter" is strictly *Paraclete*, and it means one called to the side of another to help; an advocate, or helper. Now Jesus represents the Holy Spirit as some one sent to represent him and take his place with his Church. Throughout this last discourse Jesus makes it plain that the leading characteristic of the life of his Church will be the presence of one whom he calls "The Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth." When we read the first and second chapters of the Book of Acts, we there see that our great Christian movement began with the manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.[6] And as we continue to study the Book of Acts, and the other writings of the Apostolic Church, we discover that the main characteristic of the Christian religion is the presence and power of the divine Spirit.[7] Indeed, the life of the New Testament Church was a fellowship with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The emphasis given by the Wesleyan revival to the doctrine and experience of the witness of the Spirit is in keeping with all great evangelical movements.

The Title, "Holy Spirit"

The title, "Holy Spirit," is significant. The word "Spirit" represents the essential mode of God's existence. He is a Spirit, and as such is not limited by the terms of matter. As Spirit he is everywhere present. The Psalmist says: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in sheol, behold, thou art there."[8] The Spirit is, therefore, the universal presence. The word "holy" emphasizes the divine character. He is the Spirit of holiness. His mission is to bring the holiness of God into such close relation to the lives of men that they may know that God is requiring of them a holy life. It is his mission to bring holiness into the earth. The Spirit is also described in the New Testament as "the eternal Spirit."[9] As there are no limits in space to the Spirit's power, so there are no limits in time to his being. He is as the essential God from everlasting to everlasting.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is referred to in the New Testament as personal. Our Lord's reference to him is translated by the use of the personal pronoun "he," "when he is come."[10] He also does the work of a person. He is said to guide, and to convict,[11] and to teach.[12] These are acts that can be predicated of a person only, not of a mere impersonal influence. He is also spoken of as possessing the affections of a person; the New Testament speaks of "the love of the Spirit."[13] We are also warned against "grieving the Spirit."[14] We may not grieve an influence, but we may grieve a person while under the influence of that person. Jesus also clearly revealed the personality of the Holy Spirit when he declared it possible to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, even as men might blaspheme the Father or the Son.[15] He does the work of a person in our lives. The most powerful thing in the world is personal influence. We are affected by personality for good or evil. The personal characters of men and women make a deep impression upon us. And so there is an influence that comes into our lives,

we can hardly tell why nor how, and yet it is a personal presence and power, and there are times when we know that there is a divine influence moving us to thought and action.

God the Spirit Acting upon the Heart

The Holy Spirit is God in action. He represents the divine energy as it moves within the hearts of men, influences the character of history, shapes the destinies of nations, and determines the dispensations of times and seasons, according to the wisdom and power of God. The essential field of the Holy Spirit's operation is the human heart. It is here that the Spirit works in the mind and conscience and emotions of men. He deals directly with the inmost being. There is no mediating medium between the soul and the Spirit, but he himself is there. We may not understand it, we may not be able to analyze our feelings and our thoughts; we may not be able to tell when or how the influences of the Spirit have invaded our consciouness, but, nevertheless, he has been present among all races, and accordingly as the hearts of men have responded to his overtures he has entered into their lives to shape their destinies for time and for eternity.

The Holy Spirit Convicts of Sin and of Righteousness and of Judgment [16]

The personal effects of the Holy Spirit's work are seen in various ways. He convinces of sin, he brings home to the heart and conscience the fact of guilt, he unravels the sophistries by which men seek to excuse or extenuate their sin, and makes men know that they are wrong in the sight of God. This is especially true of the sin of unbelief. The Holy Spirit brings home to the instructed soul the sin of rejecting Christ. Men may easily know and feel the disgrace that comes from vice, such as drunkenness and outrageous crime, but only the power of the Holy Spirit can enter the heart and make men see the sinfulness of sin.

He convicts men of righteousness. Through his clear manifestation of truth men are made to realize the high demand of righteousness, and this is seen in the life of the

Son of God. He makes men realize what righteousness is, and how they need it; what an indispensable thing it is to lay hold of righteousness, and that without it they will never see God in peace.

The Spirit also convicts of judgment. He brings home to the hearts of men that all sin is under the just judgment of Almighty God; that there is no escape; that everywhere, soon or later, sin must stand the searching test of the righteous judgment of the all-holy God.

The Spirit Bears Witness to Jesus [17]

The chief mission of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness concerning Jesus Christ. Indeed, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ is so intimate that he is spoken of in the New Testament as the "Spirit of Christ."[18] His activities and his interests are identified with the life and work of Christ, the Saviour. It is interesting to note in how many ways the Holy Spirit is connected with the coming of the Son of God. His presence and power are in the very birth of Jesus, as is affirmed by our Christian creed.[19] The Holy Spirit descended upon him at the time of his baptism,[20] and his personal ministry on earth was characterized by the fullness of the Spirit's power.[21] He himself said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[22] After the death and resurrection of Jesus the Holy Spirit takes his place as manifested on earth from that time until now, and thus it will be until the end of the present age. The Holy Spirit is witnessing to the life and power of the Son of God and revealing him to all whose hearts are open to his influence.

St. Paul says that no man can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Ghost.[23] It is through the teachings of the Holy Spirit within our hearts that we come to know and to love the Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour ofthe world. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit the words of Jesus are made plain to us. His wonderful and my sterious life is opened up in its richness and power. His mighty works

and, above all, his relationship to God as the Eternal Son are brought home to us through the guidance and teaching of the Spirit of Truth.

The Holy Spirit Empowers[24]

The Christian life finds the secret of its power in the indwelling of the Spirit.[25] He is able to enter our personal being in such intimate ways as to enable us to lay hold on the power of Christ, so that obedience to Christ's words becomes possible. Through the Spirit we are enabled to turn from sin in the strength of Christ; through the Christ, to become dead to sin and alive unto God.[26] We can do the will of God because we have received from Christ the power to deny self and make God's will our will. In this way we enter into the very life of God. As Christ is, so do we become in this world. This high and exalted privilege of doing things after the manner and spirit of Christ is possible only through the presence in our lives of the Holy Spirit.[27] In this way men are enabled to do things that to unspiritual people are impossible. They can do the works of Christ, such as winning souls, carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth, enduring affliction, bearing burdens, fighting the good fight of faith, achieving things that only godlike power can bring to pass.

The Holy Spirit Administers in the Church

The Holy Spirit is the administrator of this dispensation of the gospel. It was the Holy Spirit who said: "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them."[28] And they were distinctly sent into the foreign mission field by a special call of the Holy Spirit. When Paul and Silas planned to go in one direction, the Holy Spirit forbade them and guided them into another direction, so that they were led on to open the work of Christ in Macedonia.[29] As it was then, so it has been ever since. The Spirit has been the real director of great missionary programs. Where he has been left out, there blunders have been made, weakness and failure have followed. Where he has been the guide, the Church has done the work the Lord has given it to do. He knows the

plans that are divine, he knows the agencies that can achieve the results. He can direct the heart of the willing worker and bring together the teaching servant of Jesus Christ and the soul that is willing to learn but is sitting in the darkness of ignorance and unbelief.[30]

The Doctrine of the Spirit for Christian Practice

There are certain practical matters which every Christian should constantly keep in mind. It is not sufficient to say merely, "I believe in the Holy Ghost"; we must practice life in the power of the Holy Spirit. And there are certain very helpful truths in the New Testament concerning the believer's life in the Spirit. First, always remember that the Holy Spirit has approached the human race in a personal way.[31] This is seen preëminently in the fact that he has expressed himself in language through the agency of man. And so we have the sacred Scriptures, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit.[32] The Spirit is in the Word of God, and it has always been true, and the vital Christian has lived much in communion with the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. A devout and prayerful study of the Bible is one of the sure ways by which we can enter into the deeper, living meaning of the Holy Spirit's work in the world. No man will ever know the Spirit in power who discredits the Word that has brought eternal life to millions of souls now resting in the power of Jesus Christ.

Second, Paul teaches us that the Holy Spirit is our mightiest help in prayer. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered."[33] The power of intercessory prayer is always conditioned by this accepted presence and power of the Holy Ghost. And it must needs be said that this is the vital source of Christian power in life and service.

In the third place, we must bear in mind the words of Jesus when he said that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever.[34] We are sometimes misled by the emphasis with

which men stress petitions for the Spirit to come. Let us remember that the Spirit is already here. He has come to abide with the Church and to bear witness to Christ to the end. What is needed is for us to meet the conditions and open our hearts, and he will enter in. He is not far away; he is with us. Again, let us remember that the Spirit may work quietly. Pentecost and its phenomena belong rather to the period of inauguration. We sometimes miss our way by thinking of some tremendous, overwhelming, outward manifestation. Let us remember that the ordinary methods of the Holy Spirit's actions are gentle and quiet and unobserved, and that here we shall discover the secret of his power in our own lives. If we will persist in the simple way of Christ's own teaching, especially as revealed in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel, we shall not lose our way here, but shall certainly find him whom the Saviour promised. And the acceptance of the fact of his presence will make our lives new through Jesus Christ our Lord. But let us be sure that we have made up our minds that this thing is true and let us steadfastly abide in this faith, and "He will come and will not tarry."

"Scarcely I catch the words of his revealing,
  Hardly I hear him, dimly understand;
Only the power that is within me pealing
  Lives on my lips and beckons to my hand.
Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
  Cannot confound nor doubt him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
  Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

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[1] Matthew 28:19, 20. [2] 2 Corinthians 13:14. [3] Genesis 1:2. [4] Revelation 22:17. [5] John 14:16. [6] Acts 2:4. [7] Acts 8:17, 29, 39; 10:44, 45, 13:2; 15:28. [8] Psalm 139:7, 8. [9] Hebrews 9:14. [10] John 16:18. [11] John 16:8-13. [12] Luke 12:12. [13] Romans 15:30. [14] Ephesians 4:30. [15] Matthew 12:31, 32. [16] John 16:8-11. [17] John 16:13, 14. [18] Romans 8:9. [19] Luke 1:35. [20] Luke 3:22. [21] John 3:34. [22] Luke 4:18. [23] 1 Corinthians 12:3. [24] Acts 1:8. [25] Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19. [26] Romans 8:12. [27] Romans 8:9-11. [28] Acts 1:23. [29] Acts 16:6-9. [30] Acts 16:9 with verses 14, 15. [31] 1 Corinthians 2:10; John 14:16-26. [32] 1 Peter 1:20. [33] Romans 8: 26, 27. [34] John 14:16, 17.

Questions for Class Use

1. What is the place of the Holy Spirit in the Creed?

2. Why should so much more space in the Creed be devoted to facts of the Incarnation than the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

3. In what ways is the Holy Spirit referred to in the Old Testament? In the New Testament?

4. What was the central thought of Jesus's teaching concerning the Holy Spirit? How was this teaching confirmed as the initial experience of the Apostolic Church?

5. What is the significance of the term holy?

6. What objections are there to our thinking of the Holy Spirit as an influence? What ground for thinking of him as a Person?

7. What is the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Christ?

8. What was the chief thing imparted in the pentecostal gift, and in what way is it perpetuated in the life of Christians?

9. In what way is the ministry of the Holy Spirit carried on in the Church?

10. What practical application do we make of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

VI. THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Hymns of the Old Testament Church. Psalm 84, 122.

Monday.—Jesus's Anticipations of His Church. Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15-22.

Tuesday.—The Church Awaiting the Promise. Acts 1:4-26.

Wednesday.—The Church after the Fulfillment of the Promise. Acts 2:41-47; 4:31-37.

Thursday.—The Church under Administration of the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:1-13; 15:28; 16:1-9.

Friday.—The Holy Church Universal. Ephesians 3:1-21.

Saturday.—The Risen Christ to the Churches. Revelation 2-3:22.

PRAYER

Almighy and Everliving God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks for all men; We humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: and grant that all those who do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love. We beseech thee also, so to direct and dispose the hearts of all Christian rulers, that they may truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue. Give grace, O Heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments. And to all people give thy heavenly grace. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer.)

AT the outset it will be well to define the master words of this article of our Christian creed. The word "Church" is a

translation of the Greek *ecclesia*. In a general way it means congregation[1] or assembly, but it is one of those words which have been taken over and given a larger meaning. As the Israelites were spoken of as the congregation or assembly of the Lord's people, so the Church is a society or corporate body. The Christian *ecclesia* is the society that Jesus Christ has created in the world to carry on his own redeeming work among men.[2] It is the organized Christianity of the community. It is, therefore, the visible representative of Jesus Christ among men.

The Church Is Holy

The idea of the Church is further defined by the word "holy." The primary meaning of the adjective which is rendered holy is separation or dedication to sacred uses. A holy person or thing is set apart for God or belongs to God. In the New Testament the disciples are often called saints, in which case the noun has the same meaning as the adjective. The primary meaning is that the Church belongs to God, the saints are his peculiar people. This corresponds to the Old Testament conception of Israel as the Lord's chosen inheritance.[3] The Christian Church has taken the place of Israel in the economy of redemption. Christians constitute a new covenant people. It is the "Church of God, which he purchased with his own blood."[4] For this reason the Church must be holy in character as well as in name and intention. Christ gave himself for it, "that he might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."[5]

The Church Is Catholic

The word "catholic" simply means universal. It is a comparatively late addition to the Apostles' Creed, but has been in use since the latter part of the third century. The purpose of the word is not to state that the Church is everywhere, but that it is for every one. It has a meaning for the whole world. Its purpose is to embrace universal humanity. In other words, Christianity is a religion perfectly

adapted to all races and ages and the one religion through which men can realize their true life.

As time passed the term "catholic" acquired certain specific meanings. It was used to distinguish the true Christian Church from heretical bodies. It was eventually appropriated by the Roman Church as the specific designation of a certain type of ecclesiastical organization, centering in the Roman episcopate. But this use of the word is a perversion of the fact of Christianity. Protestants, in their very protesting, should hold by the word in their defense of the faith against the great Roman heresy.

There are a number of Churches claiming the title catholic that are not catholic. They have imposed conditions of membership that are inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus. For example, the Founder of Christianity did not make any form of Church government essential to the idea of the Church, but some Churches make the episcopate essential. Again, there are Churches that demand certain forms of ritual or proscriptive rites, such as a peculiar mode of baptism, as a condition of membership. The imposition of such requirements narrows the scope and meaning of the Church, and in doing this makes it sectarian.

The Church Is Visible

The Church is visible. Jesus announced his intention to establish his Church.[6] He wrote no book, but gathered a group of men about him. He made himself the center of a new and permanent movement. At the very time when he began to tell his disciples that he must suffer and die, he received their confession of faith in himself and declared that he would build his Church upon the rock of their personal faith in him and their loyalty to him.[7]

The visible nature of the Church appears in the special institutions and commands given by Christ. Our Lord's last command was the Great Commission: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[8] Here is a visible mission, and the Church is the visible organism through which this command can be obeyed. Our Lord was betrayed into the hands of sinful men, but he committed his great work into the hands of redeemed men. He instituted the ministry[9] and brotherhood of the Church.[10] He gave it the sacrament of baptism as the initiating rite, [11] signifying the new life of its membership, and the Lord's Supper the sacrament of fellowship, the witness to the perpetual source of the Church's life and power.[12]

The Church Possesses the Apostolic Teaching

The apostolic Church recognized its organic, corporate nature from the beginning. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."[13] The center of the early Christian group was the band of apostles. The disciples attended steadfastly upon the *teaching* of the apostles. This was the public teaching which immediately displaced the teaching of the scribes in the Jewish synagogues. It corresponds to the preaching of the gospel to-day.[14] Thus the Church perpetuates the teaching of Christ. There is no other organization to do this. Always and everywhere the true Church of Christ has followed the example of its divine Master, who preached the gospel to the poor.[15] A living Church is a preaching Church.

The Church Is a Fellowship

Next, observe what is called the *fellowship*. The Church began by becoming a brotherhood in communion with Jesus Christ. This fellowship was a visible thing. It was characterized by a manner of life, certain distinguishing acts toward one another; for example, the rich bearing some of the burdens of the poor and similar deeds of mercy.[16] To-day they are nursing the sick, finding jobs for the down and out, securing a better wage for those who are poorly paid. The rule of this fellowship is summed up in the admonition of Paul: "Do good to all men, especially to them of the household of faith."[17]

The breaking of the bread is the Lord's Supper. The holy communion indicates the unity of the Church in Christ Jesus.[18] It represents the source of the Church's divine life. Jesus had said: "Take, eat, this is my body; . . . this is my blood, drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament."[19] From the beginning the Church has observed this simple feast. What food is to the body Christ is to his people, the source of their spiritual life and power.

The Church Worships

Once more, the author of Acts refers to continuing in *the prayers*[13] as a characteristic practice of the apostolic Church. This represents the feature of public worship, the public prayers, which took the place of the former synagogue worship of the Jews.

The Church Is Organized

It will be seen from all this that the visible character of the Church is indicated by public acts, and these are maintained by means of certain offices. These grew out of the necessities of the case. No organization can get along without them; it cannot function unless it has leadership and direction. This, then, points out the fact that the Church of Christ has a ministry and that it may have offices of various sorts and various gifts. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers; and some, evangelists; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."[20] The early Church found it necessary to appoint seven men to look after the administration of the poor fund.[21] This varied ministry is needed for the expression of the mind of Christ in his Church.

The Church Has a Divinely Called Ministry

The center of this organic activity is the Christian ministry, called of God and set apart by the free act of the membership of the Church. Men are admitted to the ministry on the recommendation of the people of God. The multitude of the disciples chose the seven deacons,

"whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."[21] The joint action of the Holy Spirit and the Church in selecting men for the work is seen in the call of Barnabas and Saul: "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away."[22] [23]

The Church Is a Priesthood

The New Testament Church is a priesthood of believers.[24] All the members have immediate access to Christ the Head, and all may intercede through him. All, according to their gifts and opportunities, are called upon to be witnesses of the gospel of the grace of God. The early disciples realized their duty and privilege as helpers of the truth. Priscilla and Aquila labored as teachers of the word.[25]

The Organization of the Church Is Flexible

There is no iron-clad form of Church organization in the New Testament. Such a system would endanger the cause of Christ. All forms of organization must be flexible enough to be adapted to the changing conditions of society. The social order is a living thing. It grows and changes, because it is a necessary law of life that it do this. So the Church has had to adjust its organization to meet vital necessities. The development of the modern Sunday school is an illustration of this, also the various young people's societies. These are all parts of the Church. The Epworth League is as vital a phase of the Church's life as the selection of seven men to look after the poor. The great missionary organizations are parts of the organic life of the Church and supreme evidences of its vital union with Christ. It may be that new times will call for yet other types of organization, or it may be that some features which have served a good purpose in the past will fall away because they no longer meet the needs of the Church's life.

The Body of Christ

We have already noticed the New Testament designation of the Church as "the body of Christ."[26] This figure brings out the fact of the intimate union between Christ and his people, but it does so in order to show how Christ can do his work in the world. It is through the Church that Christ speaks to the world. It is in the Church that he unfolds the meaning of his purpose for the world. The Church is the field in which he trains the Christian character. The saints are found in the Church. In spite of weakness and infirmities of many of its members, the Church has given to the world its great reformers, such as Luther and Knox; the great missionaries, such as Paul and Carey; the great revivalists, such as Edwards and Wesley; the pioneers of dark continents, such as David Livingstone. Educators and philanthropists owe the inspiration of their lives to some great truth which has issued from the organic life of Christianity. The Church has furnished the men and women that have dared the slums and had faith in a gospel equal to the needs of the most desperate sinner.

All this proceeds from the power of the endless life of the Son of God, who gave himself for the Church.[27]

The Church alone has dared the venture of missions in desperate heathenism. She has enterprised undertakings in redemption and civilization that surpass in peril and deathless hope the greatest of all secular discoveries. It is to be observed that wherever the gospel finds lodgment in a land of darkness there the Church of Christ begins to live and send forth its influences of purity and power. All this is because Christ is in his Church.

The Church Will Abide

The Church will abide because of two great reasons. Christ needs it to express himself to the world. He has chosen the Church because it suits his plans and affords him the opportunity to reveal the living power of divine love among men.

The people need the Church because it ministers to certain great necessities of their nature. Men need in-

struction in the things of the spiritual and eternal world. The knowledge of God is the supreme knowledge. A people is as their idea of God. The structure of human life is determined by its spiritual knowledge. The Church is the school of Christ. Its one business is to teach spiritual truth, to declare to men the knowledge of God.

Again, men must worship. Human nature needs to look up. The soul yearns for something to adore, to be lifted above self and the things which drag life down. The Church offers worship as a free expression of the highest aspiration of the spirit of man. In gratitude and adoration, in forms of beauty and reverent fellowship men may draw nigh to God to find rest and strength, healing and courage. The living preacher may lead to the presence of the unseen by his vital message. Glorious hymn and solemn litany afford the saint and sinner the language of praise and confession. And the house of God mingles holy memories with the presence of the conscious Spirit who bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.[28] Thus by the fellowship of high ideals, the blending harmony of noble architecture, and the sweet sounds of music tuned to the infinite desire, men find themselves enlarged and enriched by what they give of themselves to God and what they receive from his boundless grace.

The Church gives to men fellowship. There is no power so great as that found in sharing in great ideas. The companionship of sorrow is helpful, but the companionship of moral aspiration is greater. No other fellowship is so inspiring and satisfying as that that comes from kindred views of God and the joy of a common experience of his great salvation. There is here some taste of the joy of God himself. "The fellowship of kindred minds if like to that above." We always discover the best in ourselves when we find ourselves in fellowship with our brethren.

The Church offers service. Man has no greater need than to give himself for others. It is in this that he becomes most like God. The Church is a supreme opportunity. Like its Divine Master, the Church can lay aside its garments and gird itself to minister to the common needs

of life.[29] The hospital, the orphanage, the school, the warrens of the poor, and the hiding haunts of vice invite the souls of men to a spiritual chivalry more ennobling than any merely earthly enterprise. It is impossible here to enumerate the manifold and varied activities that are possible within the organized life of the Christian Church. Its ministries consecrate the home in its sorrows and its joys. In the hour of a nation's high summons to duty, it is the Church that becomes vocal with the call for service and prayer. While soldiers fight and hold the far-flung battle line, it is the Church that nourishes a national faith and ministers to the wounded and sorrowing world.

The Church in Idea Has Unity[30]

It is true that the perfect Church has not yet appeared. There have been needless divisions and mistaken conception of the Master Builder's plans. Yet "the Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." There is unanimity here. This powerful center has held together so many and diverse forms of the one body that its supernatural life cannot be doubted. Christ has triumphed in the midst of weakness. But how much greater would be the triumph if his people were more united! And this shall yet be. We do not expect uniformity, but we do expect to see a more united Church in the future than we have seen in the past. And this will be hastened because we now see that the Church is the place in which all men are to find themselves. It is the household of God. In the manifoldness of our world-wide missionary program the great Church will find itself. We are marching on to the point of self-discovery in Jesus Christ our head. It shall literally come to pass that there shall be neither Jew nor Greek, for all shall be one in Christ.[31]

The Appeal of the Church

It is clear that no man can escape the ultimate appeal of the Church. No excuse is valid in the presence of what the Church has done. Still less is it possible for a man to avoid the responsibility that the Christian Church places upon

him. It is and has been the supreme witness to Jesus Christ. It challenges every man to come forth and take his stand where Christ has ever stood. It offers to every man a supreme opportunity for the fulfillment of his highest ideals and the realization of a high vocation.

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[1] Exodus 12:3. [2] Matthew 16:18. [3] Deuteronomy 32:9. [4] Acts 20:28. [5] Ephesians 5:27. [6] Matthew 16:18. [7] Matthew 16:21, 24-28. [8] Mark 16:15, 16. [9] Luke 6:13; John 15:16. [10] Matthew 18:15-20. [11] Matthew 28:19. [12] Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. [13] Acts 2:42-47. [14] Acts 6:4. [15] Matthew 11:5. [16] Acts 4:36, 37; 1 Timothy 6:17; Romans 12:13, 20. [17] Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 13:16 ("General Rules," section 2). [18] 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17. [19] Luke 22:19, 20. [20] Ephesians 4:8-12. [21] Acts 6:2-4. [22] Acts 13:2, 3; 22:14. [23] 1 Timothy 3:2-7; 8-10; 4:14. [24] 1 Peter 2:5:9. [25] Acts 18:25-26. [26] Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23. [27] Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28. [28] Romans 8:15, 16. [29] John 13:4, 5. [30] John 15:34, 35; 17:20, 21. [31] Ephesians 4:3-6, 13, 15.

Questions for Class Use

1. Give the meaning of the New and Old Testament words for Church; also the derivation of the English word.

2. What are the three marks of the Church? Explain somewhat fully how each term is applicable to the Church.

3. In what way has the Church possessed, perpetuated, and safeguarded the teachings of Christ and the apostles?

4. In what way has the Church perpetuated the fellowship and worship of apostolic times?

5. Do you regard the Christian minister as distinctly separated to the work of the ministry? If so, why? If so, does the ministry monopolize the priesthood?

6. What is the relation between Christ and the Church?

7. Have we grounds for believing that the Church as an institution will be perpetuated in this world?

8. How do you reconcile the fact of denominational diversity in the Church with the New Testament theory of unity?

9. Can you validate the claim of the Church upon every man?

VII. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—An Old Testament Acrostic Poem of Love and Praise of the Law of the Lord. Psalm 119:1-24.

Monday.—The Conscience-Stirring Power of the Scriptures of the Law. 2 Kings 23:1-25.

Tuesday.—Occasion of One of the Prophetic Writings. Jeremiah 36:1-10.

Wednesday.—Occasion of One of the New Testament Letters. 2 Corinthians 10:1-18.

Thursday.—Purpose in the Writing of the New Testament Histories. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5; John 20:30, 31.

Friday.—Some New Testament Appeals to the Old Testament. John 5:39-47; 10:34-38; Matthew 5:17-37; Galatians 4:30, 31.

Saturday.—An Interpretation of the Old Testament Law. Galatians 3:5-29.

PRAYER

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

In our studies of Christian doctrine we have already considered the great doctrines of God as Father and as Son and as Holy Spirit, and we know that the Christian life is a life derived from God, our Saviour. It is true that in God all men live and move and have their being;[1] but in a very special sense Christians enjoy eternal life through the knowledge of God, as they have received this from Jesus Christ, the Saviour.[2] The Church has been the organization that has disseminated the knowledge of God. In the Old Testament dispensation this knowledge was communi-

cated through God's dealings with the Hebrew people. In the New Testament dispensation the Christian Church has been the witness of God and his salvation, so that we can say that the great characteristic of the Christian religion is this: That it is a life in which men realize communion with God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.[3]

We now come to consider the greatest means we have of obtaining this priceless knowledge of the things of God. We Christians come to know this way of life through the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.[4] For this reason the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is one of the most important in the entire circle of Christian truth.

We often hear the words "revelation" and "inspiration" applied to the writings of the Bible, and probably most people have a somewhat vague idea of the meaning of these two great words. At the outset it will be well for us to define these words before we undertake to state the significance of the Bible.

Revelation

The word "revelation" means the unfolding or making known of something hidden. When we apply it to the great facts of religion, we mean the making known of the truths concerning God and his kingdom, truths which men cannot find out by the ordinary means of investigation and knowledge. Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."[5] They are beyond the reach of ordinary powers. When we speak of revelation, we mean that God himself has made known the truths of his kingdom to men. Now, revelation is simply this knowledge of God. With the telescope men can look beyond the earth and see the planets and stars. With the microscope men can see the things that are almost infinitely little. Through the various sciences we become acquainted with the nature of the earth and its different substances—plant life, flowers that bloom, and living creatures. We acquire some knowledge concerning electricity; we learn a great deal about human nature through the study of psychology, watching people and classifying

our observations and testing them. So by investigations men have found out many of the great truths of nature, truths that were concealed, but truths that the mind of man could find out by careful experiment and investigation. And so our knowledge of these things will continue to grow by our own efforts.

But men have never been able to find God with the telescope, nor can he be seen in the laboratory. We may, indeed, see wonders in nature that suggest the fact that there must be a designing mind back of all things, but still no man has ever yet found God in this way. The reason for it all is that God is a person, an infinite person. In order to know a person he must reveal himself to us. We know persons only in so far as they express themselves to us, even in our limited human life. So no man can find God until God reveals himself to him. So revelation is God self-disclosed, making himself known to men. But how does God make himself known? He does so by revealing himself in the hearts of men. Thus long ages ago God was manifested in the heart of Abraham, and Abraham knew that God had called him to leave his old home and travel to a far country.[6] So God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and manifested himself in the heart of Moses.[7] And so on all through the history of his people. In different ways the infinite, determinate Spirit of God reveals his holy nature, his wisdom, and his purposes in the experiences of chosen men.

So we find revelation something that has entered into the experience of men with like passions as ourselves, but men who were in a peculiar sense responsive to God's movements, whose spirits were in tune with the Infinite, whose minds and hearts, like an open window, let God's thoughts come in and who were able to understand God's actions in their lives and in the lives of other men, sometimes by such immediate nearness to their hearts that language is insufficient to describe what they pass through. Holy prophets gave visions of God that enabled them to teach men, as they had never been taught before, something of God's greatness and glory.

All God's revelations of himself to men of early times were incomplete, because the men of those days were themselves incomplete, sinners with limitations of mind and heart; but they were forerunners preparing the way for the fullness of time when One came and could be the means of a perfect revelation of God. Now this revelation has come to us complete in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."[8] The perfect and final revelation of God was made in Jesus Christ, his Son and our Lord. Jesus said to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[9] That is, the revelation of God is complete in Jesus Christ. Now, from this it will be seen that revelation is the making known of the divine Person.

Inspiration

Now let us look at the word "inspiration." This means a breathing in, and refers to the influence of the Holy Spirit of God coming into the hearts of men and so quickening their intelligence that they receive the power to discern and to speak the right with clearness and to accept the things which they have seen. This represents, then, the inbreathing of God's Spirit in the hearts of men. It results in illuminating, in quickening, and in liberating the powers of expression so that both speech and the power of writing are intensified and made the suitable means for the expression of divinely revealed truth. Revelation is God's disclosure of himself; inspiration is the power he gives to chosen men to communicate the revelation they have received of God. So these are the two main characteristics of Holy Scripture. It contains the revelation of God recorded by inspired men for the instruction of God's people and the conversion of the world.[10] The Bible is simply the record of the experiences of chosen people who have been in a peculiar manner visited by God, both as individuals and in their national capacity. The scriptures of the Old Testament contain the history of this wonderful unfolding of God among the Hebrew people. The scrip-

tures of the New Testament contain a still better and richer manifestation of God through Jesus Christ in his Church. For example, the fourth Gospel contains a record of John's wonderful vision of God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. And John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was able to see this vision and to record it so as to give men an accurate understanding of what he had seen. It contains a revelation of God written by a man inspired with the power to do it.[11]

The Bible a Revelation of God

There are certain main points, or leading characteristics of the Scriptures, that we need to keep in mind. First, they were written to reveal God and to show what men were when acted upon by the power of the living God. There is no design to teach science of any kind; that is not their subject matter. In all references in the Bible to natural facts they are spoken of in the simple manner in which they appear to men, not as scientific facts. The Bible has nothing to do with science; it is a record of how God came to men in their own time, revealing his holiness, his love, and his power to save them from their sins. The Bible is not designed to teach any form of politics nor to defend or explain any system of government. It tells the story of how God came to men who live under different governments—good, bad, and indifferent. It does not repudiate any form of national government. It does not advocate any special social system. Its message is primarily God's declaration of his will concerning man in his relation to himself and his brother man under the law of love. So we find in the early stages of the Israelitish government that the people were a tribal community governed by judges. Later on they were ruled by kings, some good, some bad. The main question with the Bible always is, Is the heart of the people true to Jehovah? Jesus recognized the Roman government, and said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."[12]

In matters of common knowledge the writers of the Bible accepted the common views of the people of their

times. For them, no doubt, the sun, as it seemed, moved around the earth, while the earth for them remained still. And so as to many other aspects of human knowledge, but this does not invalidate the Bible; it is infallible as a revelation of God.

Revelation Gradual

We also observe in the Bible that its revelation of God is gradual. God spake to the patriarchs and to the prophets, and in the last days he spake in his Son.[13] The message of Jesus was the more complete, the final revelation. In the early days God had to deal with a simple, primitive people. Jesus recognizes this fact where he says, for example: "Ye of old have heard it said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, resist not him that is evil; and whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."[14] In the New Testament the law of life is more inward and deeper in spiritual interpretation than in the Old Testament. There has been a growing knowledge of the being of God. The Bible is a history of the growing and expanding knowledge of God among men. For example, the early Hebrews did not realize the fullness of their great mission to other nations.[15] It was not until Christ came that the great missionary purpose of the kingdom of God was understood by religious men. For long ages God was endeavoring to bring his people to the point where they could understand his plan of perfect love for all mankind.

Revelation through Many Literary Forms

The revelation given in the Bible is given in a variety of forms. Part of it is history, such as the books of Judges and Kings. Here we see how God revealed himself in governing Israel, leaving them to understand something of his holiness, his justice, and his truth by bringing suffering in consequence of sin and unfolding righteousness and truth to those who were upright in heart and life. The Bible has many brief biographies. For example, there is the story of Jacob, which shows how God took him as a man full of self-seeking and given to deception, but whom God gradually taught a better way.[16] There is the story of

Joseph, whose example of fidelity and purity is an unfolding of God's plan for men of upright heart and pure.[17] The biography of Paul, contained in Luke's great book of the Acts of the Apostles, is full of wonderful manifestations of God's providence.[18] And, taken in connection with Paul's letters written by him to the Churches which he had established, we find a rich revelation of God's mind in this remarkable man. In the Psalms we have God revealed in the religious experience of men and women who thirsted for God and found him and to whom he revealed himself as a God of mercy, long-suffering, forgiveness, and truth. The great prophets are the supreme revealers of God in the Old Testament. Men like Isaiah and Micah and Amos came so near the Divine Presence and their hearts were so quickened that they perceived God as no other men had ever seen him before. God also revealed himself in the law given through Moses, which expresses his mind, his will. This is epitomized, for example, in the Ten Commandments and elaborated in the great book of Deuteronomy.[19]

In the Gospels, which are memoirs of the life of Jesus God is revealed to man in the person of Jesus Christ, our Lord. In the book of Job we have a wonderful drama in which there is a revelation of God's attitude toward suffering men. The wonderful thing about all these different forms is that they declare the same God. When in Jesus Christ we seem to see him face to face, the darkness of human limitations vanishes and we there seem to have come into the innermost presence of the living God.[20]

The Bible an Interpreter of Human Nature

The Bible becomes a great guide, not only because it is a revelation of God in a supreme sense, but it is a marvelous unfolding of human nature and shows men in their spiritual destitution; our faults are mirrored there, our weakness and inability are all portrayed there. The Bible is an infallible interpreter of the human heart; it makes no mistakes in revealing the tendencies, the very thoughts of the hearts of men. Now, it is because this wonderful Book contains the supreme truth about God and the supreme truth about

men that it is the world's sure guide. The Bible can be put to the test; it is a great, practical Book. As Paul says, the Scriptures "were written aforetime for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope."[21] And he also says: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction, which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."[22]

The Guide in Faith and Practice

The experience of ages has proved the Bible to be an infallible guide in all matters pertaining to faith and godliness. Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in one of his books, quotes Dr. Clark to illustrate this point with reference to the old guide: A colored man by the name of Stephen for a long time has guided tourists through the wonderful Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky—this great cave, with its mysterious passages, leading miles away from the entrance, descending precipices, ascending heights, crossing a river, far away from the light of day—and yet this man has guided hundreds of travelers safely, and so people continue to trust him. How much more may we trust the Holy Scriptures, which have guided millions of souls safely through life's pilgrimage, making them wise unto salvation, joyous through hope, strong in faith, mighty to do good, triumphant in temptation, and victorious in death!

The Bible an Appeal

The Bible makes its appeal to the heart; its message is to conscience and to man's sense of the need of faith in God. It must be used. To read it out of mere curiosity will not avail. To read it merely to criticize its record of men who sinned in many ways means failure. It should be read to find light and sympathy and interpretation of the life that we now live, and when this truth is put into practice it yields a richer, self-evidencing life as we go on. Its infallibility and power rest in this supreme fact, that when we use it it leads us to God. The Psalmist said: "I thought on

my ways, and turned my feet unto my testimonies; I made haste and delayed not to keep thy righteous judgments."[23] The wonderful thing about the Scriptures, as Jesus used them, was the fact that he always made them apply to himself; he showed how they pointed to him and how their truth found fulfillment in him. Every avenue of truth comes to the center, and that center is the Christ of the Gospels.[24]

I sometimes think of the Bible as I think of a great cathedral. A cathedral is usually built in the form of a cross. It leads up from the nave to the great transepts that extend at right angles to the great body of the Church like the arms of a cross. Beyond this is what is called the choir, and in the choir is placed the altar with the communion table and the great singers, and there the ministrations of the ministers take place. In a cathedral you will see many beautiful windows with symbolic figures of prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs, or a glorious representation of the transfiguration and ascension of our Lord; great windows through which shines the beautiful light of heaven. And so it is in the Bible: there comes to us the light of God through the windows of faith, but the supreme thing is in the four Gospels. Here we find the altar of our faith; here the praises of men and angels come to their highest point, for here is revealed Jesus Christ, himself our great High Priest, the sacrifice for our sins, our holy example, and source of our life and power. Through him our worship ascends to God on high, through him come various ministries of the grace of God to those who by faith discern the Lord in the written Word.

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[1] Acts 17:28. [2] 2 Peter 1:3, 4. [3] 1 John 1:3. [4] 2 Timothy 3:15, 16. [5] 1 Corinthians 2:14. [6] Genesis 12:4. [7] Exodus 19:20; 33:18, 34:6, 7. [8] John 1:18. [9] John 14:9. [10] 1 Peter 1:20, 21. [11] John 20:30, 31. [12] Matthew 22: 19-21. [13] Hebrews 1:1. [14] Matthew 5:38, 39. [15] Jonah 1:1-3; 4:10, 11. [16] Genesis 32:28, 29. [17] Genesis 39:7-21*ff*. [18] Acts 9:3; 28:30, 31. [19] Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21. [20] 2 Corinthians 4:6. [21] Romans 15:4. [22] 2 Timothy 3:16. [23] Psalm 119:59. [24] John 5:39.

Questions for Class Use

1. How are the holy Scriptures related to the Holy Catholic Church?

2. Define and give examples of (1) revelation; (2) inspiration; and (3) state in a general way what is the subject matter of the inspired record?

3. State what is the central purpose of the holy Scriptures and delineate the classes of subjects concerning which they are not designed to teach.

4. How do you harmonize the appearance of denial in the New Testament of certain Old Testament precepts with the theory of inspiration?

5. Name some of the literary forms in which the Scriptures were written; cite examples; and state what bearing this aspect of the Scriptures has upon their interpretation.

6. In what way is the Bible a book for instruction of conscience for guidance in practical life?

7. Illustrate the way in which the Bible is an appeal to the heart and conscience.

NOTE.—It is the purpose of the foregoing chapter only to give in brief the doctrine of the holy Scriptures. For a general survey of their contents the reader is referred to "The Story of the Old Testament," Seay; and "The Story of the New Testament," Carter.

VIII. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Psalms of the Communion of Saints. Psalms 131-134.

Monday.—A Prophecy of the Communion of Saints. Isaiah 25:1-26:4.

Tuesday.—Intimacy with the Master when Heaven and Earth Meet. Matthew 17:1-21.

Wednesday.—Fellowship with the Father and the Son and One with Another. 1 John 1:1-2:6.

Thursday.—The Universal Fellowship. Ephesians 3.

Friday.—Unity of the Church in Heaven and on Earth. Hebrews 12:18-29.

Saturday.—Consummation. Revelation 21:1-15, 22-27.

PRAYER

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer.)

It is probable that a great many people who recite the Apostles' Creed are not certain of the meaning of the article concerning the communion of saints. It may be that there is a general idea that in some way the fellowship of Christians is implied by the phrase. It is well, therefore, for us to consider it more particularly. The phrase itself does not appear in any form of the Creed before the fourth century and is not in common use until sometime in the fifth century of the Christian era. It is difficult to determine exactly what the full meaning of the phrase was in the minds of the Christian men who first used it. But whatever that may have been, usage has determined its meaning in the various branches of the universal Church

since the time of its first appearance in what is called the Apostles' Creed.

The "communion of saints" is not a biblical phrase, but both the words "communion" and "saints" are found in the Old and New Testaments.

The New Testament Term "Saints"

There were various designations for Christians in the early Church. They were called "disciples,"[1] "brethren,"[2] "Christians,"[3] people of "The Way";[4] but the term "saint"[5] very soon became a common designation for the members of a Christian community. In Acts Ananias says of Saul: "I have heard how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem."[6] Paul himself confesses: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison."[7] This word is Paul's common designation for persons baptized into the Church. The title is used so frequently and in so many different connections that it is clear that it is not used to distinguish between Christians and Christians as we do now. For example, the Roman Church uses the term "saints" for a certain group of eminent members of the Church who have long since passed away and, according to the practices of their Church, have been canonized or designated as "saints." In our Protestant Churches when we use the word "saint" we generally mean some individual who is eminent for deep spirituality and saintliness of character; but in the New Testament the word is used in a general sense and is applied to the members of the Church as such, and for the very good reason that these disciples were called out of Judaism and heathenism into a new life to be holy, and no doubt the vast majority of them rose far above the character of the people with whom they mingled, though then, as now, there were unworthy members within the body of the Church. But the main idea is that they were called in a high and heavenly calling, to live up to the ideal set before them in the life and salvation of Jesus Christ.[8] So that it is well for us to keep in mind the purpose of the word, although we understand it as including in its compass all Christians who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

The New Testament Term "Communion"

The Greek word which is rendered "communion" occurs about nineteen times in the New Testament. It signifies fellowship, participation, contribution. In the Book of Acts it is said that "the disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles' teachings and fellowship."[9] And Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Ye were called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ, our Lord."[10] John in his First Epistle uses the word in a number of passages: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ";[11] "If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another."[12] In one place Paul uses the word as applied to the collection: "To make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem";[13] "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."[14]

It appears, then, that the general idea of the communion of saints is that of the fellowship of those who have learned to worship God through faith in Jesus Christ, his Son.

Fellowship with the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit

The communion of saints is based upon their higher fellowship with God. John says: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."[11] The communion of Christians begins then in their communion, or intercourse, with God. This presupposes the knowledge of God, the blending of our spirits with his Spirit, and all Christians have equal access to the Father of our spirits, for "in him we live and move and have our being."[15] We have come into his fellowship in these Christian centuries through the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. So the apostle John adds to his statement that "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."[11] When we say that we have communion with Jesus Christ, it means that we learn to think the things that are pleasing to him, to love the things that he loves, and to do the things that he did, animated by his ideal and sustained by the presence of his Holy Spirit. The distinctive need in Christian fellowship is in the fact that it is obtained through

Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me"[16] —that is, through him. Jesus Christ has established a communion, or fellowship, between God and man by what he is and what he has done. Through the power of his life Christians are brought into a sense of the presence and the power of God to save, and as they approach God in the spirit and in the name of Jesus they enter into conscious communion with God. But there must be added to this conception the idea of the communion of the Holy Spirit. In the thirteenth chapter of 2 Corinthians Paul pronounces the apostolic benediction, and the closing section of that benediction is: "The communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."[17] Paul, also, in writing to the Philippians, refers to this fact when he says: "If there is any communion of the Spirit, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind."[18] When we speak of the communion of the Holy Spirit, there is, first of all, the fact that the Spirit enters into the heart of the believer and establishes fellowship with him. There is the inner working of the mind of the Spirit in the mind of the Christian. This fellowship of the Spirit with the human soul is immediate and direct; he enters into the depths of our being; he brings within our inmost life the mind and power of the living God. By his presence he awakens in our souls spiritual desires and causes us to lift up our hearts unto the Lord, our God. So that the cry in the heart of a Christian is of "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."[19] Now what is of worth and power in our Christian lives is the immediate result of our communion with the Holy Spirit, and by this Spirit we are held in fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

It appears from what has been said that the essence of the Christian life is a communion or fellowship or spiritual intercourse between the souls of believers and the triune God, who has been revealed to us as Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Now, the thing that constitutes us as saints in any sense of that word is this fellowship with God. It may be the fellowship of the great and eminent in the Christian life, and it may be the fellowship of those whose

faith is but feeble and whose lives do not shine in the clearer light of the noblest and strongest Christians; yet they do have a degree of faith and of comfort, and they are striving after better things. And these, too, are to be numbered among the saints.

The Communion of Saints on Earth

By the communion of saints we mean the organic society of all who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ; and they are divided into two classes: the saints now living on earth and the saints who have entered heaven. Charles Wesley has described it in the following lines from one of his most beautiful hymns:

> "One family we dwell in him,
> One Church, above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death:
> One army of the living God,
> To his command we bow;
> Part of his host have crossed the flood
> And part are crossing now." [20]

The greatness of this communion of the saints is also indicated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said of the believers: "They have come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven." [21] But first we consider the significance of the communion of the saints on earth. This is the fellowship of the Church militant, the members of which are in the world fulfilling the purposes of Jesus Christ in the development of the character, in the spread of the gospel, and the unfolding of the glory of God among men.

In the first place, this communion of saints is a visible fellowship; it finds expression in the open profession of faith in Christ before believers.[22] It is an open entrance into a body of people who profess allegiance to Jesus Christ.[23] The most important aspect of this fellowship is in the act of worship or the gathering together of the people of God to worship him in prayer and praise and devout meditation,

dwelling upon the wonderful truths of his revelation, unifying their faith and their praises as a single act.[24] Worship has been a mark of a genuine knowledge of God since his first manifestation of himself to men, and the Church rises into the beauty of holiness and into the joy of fellowship in proportion to the sincerity and unselfishness of their spiritual insight in public worship. Solitary Christianity has never succeeded. The writer of Hebrews exhorts Christians "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together."[25] The instinct of those who are in communion with God is to get together in the act of worship.

In the Church there are three special features of our Christian worship that we need to observe: First, preaching, which is the setting forth of the truth of the kingdom of God and in itself an inspiration to repentance and faith and adoration.[26] The message of the prophet is a vital and an indispensable element in holding together the saints for their common worship and service. Second, this communion finds expression in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.[27] This is the supreme act of our public worship, an act in which we enter together, expressing our common faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord in the symbolic act of eating bread and drinking wine in token of our faith in Christ, who is the Bread of Life to us and through whose blood we have obtained remission of our sins and have entered into peace with God, our Father.

There is danger in some of our Protestant societies of ignoring the high place of the Lord's Supper. When it is devoutly and intelligently celebrated, it is an act in which the saints come nearer to each other and to their Lord than in any other connection of their organic life as a society of believers in Christ. At the Lord's table we are one body, one fellowship, one faith, all equally conscious of our unworthiness and our dependence upon Christ for redeeming love. In the Holy Supper we banish all malice and uncharitableness toward others, and around that holy altar we forgive as we hope to be forgiven, and by faith we discern in the sacrament the presence of him who said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the

midst."[24] But this passes on into the fellowship of the saints in which they, as the apostle says, "exhort one another or comfort one another,"[28] what we might call among Methodists "the class meeting," "testimony meeting," "conference meeting," where by word of sympathy or by witnessing to the faith we encourage one another up the shining way.

The communion of saints involves also intercession of believers one for another.[29] Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, and it is also the soul of this fellowship. In nothing was Paul more conspicuous than in his power of intercession for his converts. Without ceasing he made mention of them in his prayers to God.[30] And so the communion of saints is a fellowship and intercession, for themselves and for the world, and especially the intercession for one another that they may be strong to witness for Christ and to carry forward his work. The need for such intercession is especially manifest in all persecution or when some great task is given to the Church, when through the force of circumstances and the providence of God the saints realize the need of mutual faith.

The Saints in Heaven

We believe that the saints who have passed over also belong to our great fellowship. But what of the condition of the saints in the country to which they have gone? Here we can speak only briefly, but none the less with certainty, for the Holy Scriptures teach us of the saints who are with Christ.[31] Jesus himself said to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,"[32] and the apostles witnessed the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.[33] Paul himself desired to "depart and be with Christ."[34] Jesus said as he was about to go hence: "Because I live, ye shall live also."[35] From the teachings of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament we infer, first of all, that the saints who have entered into the heavenly state are fully conscious of their identity and are in immediate fellowship and communion with the Saviour. They must know one another, probably

by a finer and keener sense than that by which we know each other here, by a spiritual intuition and appreciation, quicker than thought and as certain as the very life itself is certain.

We gather also from the Scriptures that the saints in heaven worship.[36] The seer on Patmos beheld the glorious company of the redeemed, and they were worshiping God, awaiting the consummation of all things. And with worship there must also be heavenly employment. We may not be able to discern the conditions of that spiritual state of the disembodied hosts, but there is nothing more active than the human spirit on earth. Often we feel that the body is a weight and a clog to our desires for action, affected as it is by disease and the inheritance of evil and all that has grown out of this complex organism as one generation passes to another generation its defects. But we may be sure that the saints in light even now are busy in some holy employment. They not only worship, but they serve and wait upon God's will.[37]

There is no justification for any supposition that it is the privilege of the saints on earth to pray for the saints in heaven. The Bible is silent here. They have passed from us. Nor do we know whether the saints can intercede for us; a veil has been drawn here. But it can scarcely be doubted that in some way the triumphant saints do minister to those who are heirs of salvation, for not a few of God's saints on their deathbed have testified to the conscious presence of visitants from another world. Some will doubt this, others will believe; but of this we may be certain, that even as we long for them, they also remember us, and as we approach the end of the journey they, too, are waiting on the other side, and what is richest and strongest is the assurance that we have that they, too, are worshiping God in heaven as we worship him on earth, and through him there is a bond of communion between us.[38] The same Christ that we greet in our daily prayer is the same Christ that they greet in conscious communion. There is an unbroken fellowship, because Jesus is the bond of union.[39] As we touch him by prayer and faith, they also touch him

through worship and service. It is the glory of the communion of saints that all are one in him. It may be that we cannot realize how close we are; doubtless they are nearer to us than we know. So when we recite this article of the Creed let it have this meaning for us, our fellowship here and our fellowship there.

"O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.

But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on his way.

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." [40]

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[1] Acts 6:1. [2] 1 John 3:14. [3] Acts 11:26. [4] Acts 19:9. [5] Romans 1:7. [6] Acts 9:13. [7] Acts 26:10. [8] 1 Timothy 1:9. [9] Acts 2:42. [10] 1 Corinthians 1:9. [11] 1 John 1:3. [12] 1 John 1:7. [13] 2 Corinthians 8:4. [14] Hebrews 13:16. [15] Acts. 17:28. [16] John 14:9, 6. [17] 2 Corinthians [18] Philippians 2:1,2. [19] Roman 8:15, 16. [20] Methodist Hymnal, 611. [21] He- 12:22-24. [22] 1 Timothy 6:12. [23] Acts 2:41. [24] Matthew 18:19, 20. [25] Hebrews 10:25. [26] Mark 16:15; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:2. [27] Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. [28] 1 Thessalonians 4:18. [29] James 5:16. [30] Ephesians 1:15-23; Romans 1:8-10. [31] 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. [32] Luke 23:43. [33] Matthew 17:3, 4. [34] Philippians 1:23. [35] John 14:19. [36] Revelation 5:13; 7:13-17. [37] Matthew 18:10 with Hebrews 1:14. [38] Revelation 6:9. [39] John 17:20-24. [40] Methodist Hymnal, 430.

Questions for Class Use

1. Compare the New Testament use of the term saint with that of the Roman Church and with that commonly accepted.

2. What three meanings has the word communion in the New Testament?

3. What is the essential character of the Christian's communion with God? In what New Testament formula is the fact of this communion expressed. (2 Corinthians 13:14.)

4. What are the three outstanding features of the communion of saints on earth? Is Protestantism usually as careful of these expressions of the communion of saints as their importance demands?

5. What do we know of the communion of saints in heaven?

6. In what way are we affected by the belief that the Church militant on earth and the Church triumphant in Heaven are one?

IX. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—The Cry of a Penitent Soul. Psalm 51.

Monday.—The Righteous Requirements of God Illustrated in the Holy Law. Deuteronomy 5:6-29.

Tuesday.—The Son of Man Forgives Sin. Mark 2:1-13; John 8:1-11.

Wednesday.—A Parable of Forgiveness. Luke 18:9-14.

Thursday.—A Parable of Redeeming Love of God. Luke 15:11-32.

Friday.—Justification by Faith in Christ. Romans 3:19-31; 5:1-8.

Saturday.—Forgiving and Being Forgiven. Luke 7:36-50.

PRAYER

Almighty and Everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer.)

ONE article in the Apostles' Creed affirms belief in the "forgiveness of sins." No doubt many persons often recite this without any very certain idea as to its meaning. Perhaps most persons repeat it with hardly more than a general idea that in some way sin is affected by belief in God, perhaps mainly as by the removal of penalty of some sort.

We ought, however, to get as clear an idea of these great religious realities as is possible. For faith is not a matter of confused ideas or vague feeling. It needs definite truth as its guide to action. The forgiveness of sin is an expression that covers more than is generally understood. The Bible has much to say concerning it, using different terms to express the deliverance of the soul from sin. The Psalmist

speaks of transgression being *forgiven*, sin being *covered*, and iniquity not *imputed;*[1] or he calls upon God to *wash* him or *cleanse* him from his sin.[2] According to his tender mercies, God blots out transgression.[3] Jesus said to the sick of the palsy: "Son, thy sins are forgiven."[4] Paul, writing concerning the great salvation, speaks of Christ as the one "in whom we have our redemption, even the forgiveness of sins."[5]

The Meaning of Sin

In order to come to an understanding of the nature of the forgiveness of sins, we need to get an idea of the meaning of sin. It is one of the most universal characteristics of the human race. Men differ in race and language. They have social and religious customs of all sorts. In feature and color of skin there is every variety and type, yet they are alike in their sins. Selfishness, greed, sensuality, deception, and malice appear in all races. Sin and its train of evil effects present the same aspects under all types of human life.

Probably the most persistent and ineradicable affirmation of the fact of sin is the sense of guilt. Conscience is an inevitable fact in the moral history of men. The great dramas of our literature are based largely upon the fact of human perversity and the consequences of wrongdoing.

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart?"

These lines from "Macbeth" finely suggest the deeper woes of wrongdoing, the ills that no human therapy can heal.

All tragedy is a witness to the fact of sin. And who is there who has not felt in some degree the sense of sin? It is not merely the testimony of the more depraved of our race, but the choicest men and women have uttered their profoundest convictions concerning the sense of unworthiness and sin which they have felt most keenly. Only the

superficial and thoroughly hardened ever trifle with this great fact. The mighty minds, reformers and prophets, men who have altered the course of history and caused men to enter into the secrets of their own souls, have been men who have met the fact of sin in their own experience and surveyed it in its manifest effects in the world.

Sin is defined in various terms. The apostle John says "sin is lawlessness."[6] It is a transgression of law and possesses the spirit of lawlessness. Here the thought is primarily disobedience to moral authority. Another word used in the New Testament for sin means a missing of the mark, coming short of a required standard of character.[7] Probably most persons recognize sin as being one or the other of these two things; they have done something which conscience affirms to be doubtful or wrong, or they have missed their ideal, have not measured up to duty or the standard of character accepted by them. Very frequently probably the sense of sin is connected with evil done to some person or a violation of some personal obligation.[8]

But this does not explain the primary meaning of sin. Why is the transgression of law sinful? What is the primary basis for the moral distinctions? What is the ultimate reason for this world being a moral world? The reason is that this is God's world, and he is an infinitely holy and good God.[9] Moral distinctions are derived from him. Sin does us harm personally, and it does harm to those with whom we come in contact; but the supreme fact about sin is that it is against God. The violation of moral law is simply disobedience to the will of God. The Psalmist said: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."[10]

Sin Is Perversion of Sonship

Sin is the perversion of the relation of our souls to God. It consists in opposition to God and his purposes in his universe. But men are not always conscious of the full meaning of this. Sometimes sin is only a matter of indifference so far as their consciousness of the fact is concerned. But this does not take away the sinfulness of their acts.

Sin is the opposition of the will of man to the will of God. It may take the form of self-assertion, a determination to detach life from all subjection to God. Like the prodigal, the sinner takes his inheritance and departs into a far country.[11] So sin is saying good-by to God.

Sin is positive evil. It is not merely a departure from God or the transgressing of a formal command; it is evil in itself. It has the quality of positive wrong. Such is the best testimony of conscience. It is destructive of good. It injures and destroys supreme values. It is a disintegrating power in the moral universe.

Sin is selfishness. It places self before God or man. It is self-indulgence. It is at this point that sin is seen in its social effects. All the crimes men commit are antisocial. Murder, theft, lying, covetousness are expressions of the selfishness of sin. Others must suffer in order that the self-seeking impulses of men may be gratified. In a general way we may say that sin is any violation of the law of love. Jesus summed up the whole duty of man when he said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[12] The sins chiefly condemned by Jesus were insincerity toward God[13] and unmercifulness toward man.[14]

The primary conception of sin is that of a perversion of the will. Sin is possible because men are free; they can will to do right or wrong. It is an opposition of the will of man to the will of God. It is rebellion in the moral universe. But no attempt to explain sin as an external or legal transaction can adequately describe its real nature. Sin is more than the transgression of law; it is a failure to measure up to our true relation to God. It is unfilial. The relation between man and God is not merely that of ruler and subject; it is the relation of father and child. Anything that violates the loving service of a true sonship is sin.

Sin a Matter of the Heart

This presses sin back into the interior life. Sin is a matter of the heart. It is a question of bad motives and evil

dispositions.[15] Jesus forever settled the question of sin by pressing it back into the inner life. It is not the outward, but the inner hatred or impure desire that primarily makes men sinners.

It is the inwardness of man's moral life that makes unbelief a sin. This is the root sin. A right relation between man and God depends upon simple trust. Without faith it is impossible to please God.[16] Unbelief is suspicion of God. Where distrust and suspicion exist there cannot be true fellowship between moral beings.

From what has been said, it is clear that sin exists in a real sense as defect of character. It is not merely an overt act of the will. It is this of course, but it is also a state or condition of character. There is such a thing as a character that is hostile to God. Paul declares that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.[17]

The depraved or sinful character is the result of various causes. It is primarily due to overt transgression of the holy will of God. The more men do wrong, the more does sinful character become fixed. There is personal deterioration of character as the consequence of one's personal sins. But this is also connected with the fact that men live in a society of sinners. All men are sinners.[18] We are in the midst of a kingdom of sin. We share in the sins of other men. We are in a measure responsible for the evil done in a community. There is a solidarity in human life. It is often

> "The sin that we do two by two
> That we pay for one by one."

Isaiah cried out: "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."[19] In a profound sense we are guilty of the sins of society. That this is true is seen in the fact that whenever we turn against the sins of our day the sinful society will turn against us and if possible crucify us.

There is such a thing as inherited evil. The evil of one generation is passed on to the next. We may call this depravity, or a tendency to go astray from God. We cannot be truly guilty of evil in so far as it is only an inheritance,

but we are guilty in so far as we do not resist and overcome evil tendency. Wherever depravity is permitted to control our thoughts and actions it becomes the means of separating us from God, and this is sin. Wherever society yields to the impulses of depravity it sets up a kingdom of evil in opposition to the kingdom of God. For this reason we find that the world is in a state of enmity toward God and spiritual things.[20]

The Meaning of Guilt

The primary result of sin is the fact of guilt. Men are guilty before God. The consciousness of guilt varies according to the moral awakening of the sinner. But all men know themselves to be sinners, and they know that they are guilty. A little introspection of conscience will prove this. But the sense of guilt is not simply a sense of responsibility for this or that particular wrong done; it is a consciousness that the whole life is tainted. Somehow sin has established itself in our nature. We may fix our minds on one or a dozen evil things with which we have been involved, but this does not sum up the fact of our moral relations with a holy God. Sin becomes a burden, a load, an entanglement. We know we have done wrong, and there is no health in us.

The sinner is guilty before God. This means that he is exposed to penalty. Penalty is the correlative of guilt. The simplest statement of the meaning of penalty is that it involves suffering and loss. The inevitable consequence of sin is suffering and loss. So everywhere we see suffering and loss following transgression in this present world. And unless something is done for the sinner, suffering and loss will hang upon the guilty soul in the world to come. There is no doubt about this. Jesus was very clear in his statement that evil results of sin would follow men into the future state.[21]

But guilt is not the main point in this article. What we are concerned with immediately is the remission of sin, the doing away with guilt and the power of sin in the world.

What Forgiveness Does for Us

Forgiveness deals, first of all, with guilt. We must stress this point, because there is a tendency to confuse the real principles involved here. Forgiveness does not mean that all the penalties of sin are remitted to men. The Psalmist, referring to Israel's sins of old, says: "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions."[22] So Jesus declared to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven,"[4] but he healed him afterwards as a separate act of mercy. There are many persons to whom God grants pardon, but they bear in their minds and bodies all through life the consequences of their sins. David's sins were forgiven, but certain of the penalties of his sins followed him all his days.[23]

Guilt implies condemnation. The guilty soul is under condemnation. The judgment of God is against evildoers. They are exposed to the recoil of God's holy nature against sin. The Psalmist cries out: "Hide thy face from my sins."[24] Guilt merits God's condemnation. The essence of the penalty against sin is in the fact that God turns from the sinner. He hides his face not from the sin, but from the sinner. Separation from God is the fearful consequence of sin. This means death. To be without God is to be without hope.

Forgiveness means reconciliation with the Father, against whose holy will and gracious love we have done evil. What is wanted in forgiveness is not merely the withdrawal of an external penalty, but the getting rid of an evil conscience which disturbs the sinner at the thought of the presence of God. It is to be placed in right relations with God. It is to be taken into God's confidence, to enter into a relation of peace and free fellowship with God. Where this is done much will follow. It is true that after forgiveness we must die the death of separation of body from soul; this will not be overcome until the resurrection power of Jesus is fully realized. God's forgiveness enables us to face the eternal future without fear. We shall not go into the world to come alone and friendless, but we shall face it all in the consciousness of God's free pardon.

The main thing accompanying God's forgiveness is the gift of power to go and sin no more.[25] The one thing about all true pardon is the restoration of confidence. We never really forgive a fellow being until we are able to trust him again. To say that you forgive but cannot forget is to say an impossible thing. No forgiveness counts that holds the old distrust. God's forgiveness of the sinner puts him back in a relation of trust. The prodigal is received on the old footing. The Father will not hear of his becoming as one of the hired servants.[26] No, as far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgression from us.[27] The great element in all forgiveness is the distance to which sin is removed. The forgiven man enters into a life in which he feels that God has put him in the place of true fellowship. He is bound over to God in gratitude and peace, because he knows that God is once more trusting him with life and opportunity.

How Forgiveness Comes

There are two great matters which bear upon the subject of pardon upon which we must dwell, if only for a moment. The first is repentance. Never can any man find pardon until he first realizes the meaning of repentance. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.[28] But it must be repentance. Repentance means, first of all, a new mental attitude toward sin. It is a change of feeling in regard to sin. There is sorrow for the evil past, not merely for its results, but because of its evil character. There is a change of will. The penitent says: "I will arise and go to my father." There is purpose and hope for a new life in the genuine penitent. A broken and contrite heart is the true preparation for pardon. Repentance involves confession, forsaking of sin, and amendment of life.[29]

But there is a second fact upon which we can only touch here. God's pardon comes by way of atonement. It is a gift in which he gives himself. To us Christians pardon is given through Jesus Christ.[30] God himself has had to deal with our sins. It is God who moves upon our hearts in the

call to repentance.[31] Nowhere is there such a call to repentance as may be seen in the gift of Jesus Christ. His holy revelation of God's heart and mind toward sinners is enough to awaken and subdue the souls of sinful men; but Christ has done more. He has carried our sin. He has suffered for us, the just for the unjust.[32] God himself in Christ has entered the field and dealt with sin.

The great difficulty with a man fully awake morally is to be able to forgive himself. A man who forgives himself easily is really going away from God. At our highest and best we do not see how what has been done can be undone. The poison in every sin is in the fact that it lies there identified with our wills. We did it, and there is no way to say that it is undone. And there is only one way in which this can be met. We cannot do it; God must do it himself. He must satisfy our consciences and meet our sense of right. He must reveal perfect holiness and provide a guarantee of power to arrest the fatal power of sin. This he does in the free gift of Jesus Christ his Son, who gave himself a ransom.[33] His holy love and perfect obedience have rendered the homage due to broken law and have brought to us the revelation of redeeming power that sets us free from the law of sin and death.

By faith in Christ sinful men may appropriate God's forgiveness. Indeed, to accept Christ is to accept God's pardon, for Christ is his gift of life and reconciliation.[34] With Christ all things are given to us. We accept him by simple trust.

"Not all the blood of beasts
  On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
  Or wash away its stain.

But Christ the heavenly Lamb
  Takes all our sin away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
  And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay its hand
  On that dear Head of thine
While like a penitent I stand
  And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
  The burdens thou didst bear
When hanging on the curséd tree,
  And hopes her guilt was there.

Believing we rejoice
  To see the curse removed;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
  And sing his bleeding love."

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[1] Psalm 32:1, 2. [2] Psalm 51:2. [3] Psalm 51:1. [4] Mark 2:5. [5] Ephesians 1:7. [6] 1 John 3:4. [7] ἁμαρτάνα. [8] Luke 15:18. Titus 3:11. [9] 1 Peter 1:15, 16. [10] Psalm 51:4. [11] Luke 15:13. 12 Matthew 22:39. [13] Luke 11:39. [14] Luke 11:45-48. [15] Luke 6:45; Romans 2:5. [16] Hebrews 11:6. [17] Romans 8:7. [18] Romans 3:23. 19 Isaiah 6:5. [20] 1 John 2:15-17. [21] Matthew 7:21:23; 11:22-24; 19:35. [22] Psalm 99:8. [23] 2 Samuel 12:11. [24] Psalm 51:9. [25] John 5:14; 8:11. [26] Jude 15:22-24. [27] Isaiah. [28] Luke 15. [29] 1 John 1:8; Matthew 3:8. [30] Romans 3:23-26; Acts 2:38. [31] Acts 5:31. [32] Peter 3:18. [33] 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

Questions for Class Use

1. What is primarily included in the scriptural idea of forgiveness of sin?

2. The meaning of sin. (1) What reasons have we for believing that sin is universal? (2) What are the two outstanding New Testament definitions of sin? (3) What essential relation underlies the whole conception of sin?

3. How is sin related to the Fatherhood of God, hence to the sonship of man?

4. Can we distinguish sin as a state of the heart, apart from any specific act of disobedience?

5. What is the first result of sin as it affects our relation to God and his law?

6. What does forgiveness do for us?

7. By what way may we obtain the "forgiveness of sins?"

X. REGENERATION

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—A Covenant, a Prayer, and a Promise. Ezekiel 18:31; Psalm 51; Ezekiel 36:25-35.

Monday.—Jesus's Teaching of the New Heart. John 3: 1 21.

Tuesday.—The Law of the New Life. Matthew 5:1-32.

Wednesday.—The Manifestation of the Regenerate Life. 2 Corinthians 3.

Thursday.—The Classic Example of Regeneration. Acts 9:1-9; 1 Timothy 1:12-20.

Friday.—Some Figures for the New Birth. Colossians 3:1-4; 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Saturday.—The Witness to the New Birth. 1 John 5:1-12.

PRAYER

Come, O Lord, in much mercy down into my soul and take possession and dwell there. A homely mansion, I confess, for so glorious a majesty, but such as thou art fitting up for the reception of thee, by holy and fervent desires of thine own inspiring. Enter then, and adorn, and make it such as thou canst inhabit, since it is the work of thy hands. Give me all that ever thou hast made, yet could not all my desires be satisfied. Let my soul ever seek thee, and let me persist in seeking till I have found, and am in full possession of thee. (Augustine, 354-430.)

THE word "regeneration" is one of the master words in theology. It connotes a great spiritual change that is wrought in men when they turn from a life of self to the life that is found in God. It is a technical designation for a fact that is common in religious history and experience where human beings undergo a change in heart and in life.

REGENERATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Regeneration is an idea that finds expression in the Old Testament as well as in the New. The great prophets of

Israel saw clearly that the only hope of their people was in some fundamental change in heart and disposition that could induce them to the faithful keeping of their covenant with God. So the prophet Ezekiel declares that God would give Israel "a new heart and a new spirit."[1] Jeremiah speaks of the old covenant as having been broken by Israel and the promise of a new covenant in which God would write his laws in the minds and hearts of his people.[2] They saw that the fundamental need was the inward change in order to bring man into fellowship with God.

Found in Christian History

The fact of the changed life is common in the history of Christian work everywhere. The heathen have known the experience of "twice-born" men. In the slums of our great cities and in our ordinary Church life we are familiar with the person who has experienced a change of heart. In the New Testament the idea is clearly stated by Jesus and his apostles.[3] Regeneration is the aim of the gospel; it is the great central, practical doctrine in the Christian conception of salvation from sin unto holiness. According to the apostle Paul, the only thing that counts is for a man to become "a new creature in Christ Jesus."[4] No amount of mere intellectual belief, no sort of religious observance will do; the soul must be renewed in the likeness of God. So Jesus declared to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born from above."[3] In one way or another the entire New Testament refers to this truth. To be in Christ the old nature must be transformed; men must walk in newness of life.[5] To be a Christian means to have found the life that is hid with Christ in God.[6] Sometimes the whole subject is covered under the one word "conversion,"[7] which means a turning around and a turning from a life of self and sin to a life of faith and obedience in Jesus Christ. However, the word regeneration is intended to describe the inward change, the real essence involved in the soul's coming into right relations with God. For this reason it is important to inquire into the nature and characteristics of the great transformation represented by this vital doctrine.

A New Birth

The word regeneration[8] means literally being born again. The central idea is that of birth. Jesus used its equivalent in his conversation with Nicodemus when he said: "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[3] So we are to inquire what he meant by the word "born"[9] and what is implied where the New Testament used the word "begotten," or "birth," to express the beginnings of the Christian life. Clearly the word is a figure of speech. It takes a process known in the natural world and applies it to spiritual things. Everybody is familiar with the simple idea of birth. It is the coming of a new life into the world. How far is the conception of birth applicable to the spiritual change which is wrought in people whereby they are fitted to become members of the kingdom of God? The figurative use of the word "birth" was not unknown to the Jews. When a Gentile became a proselyte from heathenism to the Jewish religion, he was said to be born. It was a change from his own life to the entrance into the new life. This idea is not unfamiliar in various uses. For example, we have intellectual births, when with a new vision of life's meaning we see facts as we have not seen them before, and we are born into a larger understanding of life's meaning and privileges. There is a sort of birth here, a transition that occurs when the mental and moral horizon is enlarged and one enters into a life of larger sympathies, and exercises a life of greater power. Such breaks and transitions in the natural life might be described as new birth. But this does not go far enough to represent the New Testament idea of regeneration. It is a deeper thing than any of these turning points in our intellectual history.

The Life before Regeneration

But regeneration is not the same thing as an absolutely new beginning of a life; there was a certain sort of life there before. It is the transformation of a life already capable of moral action, already vital, with the power of conscience, already capable of some degree of belief in God and divine things. There is this difference between a natural birth and

a spiritual birth characteristic of the new Christian life. In our natural life we have no choice; we are brought into life without any exercise of the intellect or will. We are descendants, and without volition of any sort whatever we come into natural life. But spiritual birth comes about by the response of our moral nature to the movement of God toward us. It comes in answer to the repentance, faith, and submission of men to the power of God's Holy Spirit, and the rebirth is the result of man's voluntary response to the overtures of God's grace. There is a theory of the religious life that insists that in regeneration man is perfectly passive, and God only acts. But this cannot be. While it is true that no man can take this life of himself unless God gives it to him, it is also true that God cannot give this life to man unless man is willing to meet the spiritual conditions of the gift.

The Limit of Power of the Old Life

Jesus said that it was impossible for a man to enter into the kingdom of God unless he were born from above, or spiritually born.[3] Why is this new birth necessary? We shall ask this question in the light of the Bible teachings and of the common experiences of mankind. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit; marvel not that I said unto you ye must be born anew."[10] This means that man has a natural life which he inherits through the human race of which he is a member. The flesh simply represents this natural life. It is a gift of life to man as a whole; it is the natural, and, as Paul says, "the natural is first and afterwards that which is spiritual."[11] As we come into this world we come as members of the human family, with the promise and potency of a rich and wonderful life, but we do not obtain by natural birth the spirit and the power of life everlasting. The flesh is simply unable to confer life eternal; it is the sphere and the power of the natural man. This natural man must become the spiritual man in order to enter into the fellowship of God and of his kingdom. Paul tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually dis-

cerned."[13] In order to understand and rejoice in spiritual things the natural man must be transformed into the spiritual man. There is no other way.

The Old Life without Spiritual Light

The natural man is capable of thinking and feeling and willing. He has a moral sense, the power of discerning between right and wrong; he is a moral person, capable of moral and intellectual action. He is susceptible to a sense of duty. He is also capable of natural affection, the love of parent and child, and the various degrees of kinship and friendship. He is capable of reasoning concerning God and his relation to the world, but the natural man does not of his own native power lay hold of spiritual things. He lacks a certain vital sense of fellowship and union with God; he lacks proof and inner conviction of the reality of spiritual things.[13] Like as one in a dream, he feels perhaps that spiritual things must be, but there is a veil between his life and the life of the kingdom of heaven. So he needs something that is an awakening, an illumination of his soul. He needs also a spiritual power to enter into his life and unite his heart to God by the power of a living faith and in the consciousness of a personal love.

Regeneration Subordinates Natural Tendencies

The natural life of man is marked by certain tendencies, instincts, and appetites. Many of them are similar to the instincts of the lower animals. Hunger, the struggle for food, fondness for offspring, fear, anger are all traits that may be observed in animals, and they are traits to be found in men. In men all these powers and tendencies need to be subjected to the regulated power of spiritual purpose. There is danger here. It takes the power of the new life to bring all these traits and appetites into subjection to a higher purpose. Men must learn to eat and drink to the glory of God.[14] It takes a spiritual regeneration to reorganize and spiritualize the whole life.

The Race Sin

The natural man is tainted by the inheritance of race sin.[15] The whole human race is affected by sin, so that

individuals inherit from their parents the tendencies which make them liable to many forms of sin. So profound is this fact of race sin that thoughtful men in many nations have felt the need of some transforming power to enter the hearts of men and to overcome the inheritance of depravity. This fact of depravity manifests itself in different ways. One of its characteristics is a strong spring toward self-assertion—selfishness we might call it; a self-seeking and self-centering of life, probably one of the most powerful forces in life, a tendency that enters into and takes possession of our natural appetites and fashions, bringing into captivity the entire life to some of the lower instincts of the soul.[16] Another form in which this depravity manifests itself is the tendency to resentment, to anger, a certain sort of antagonism, strengthened and wrapped up in the spring toward self-assertion.[17] In many ways human nature reveals the fact of its inheritance of moral defect and limitation.

To overcome all this powerful life tendency and to rise into the fullness of fellowship with God a man's moral nature must be born anew. The Holy Spirit must come in and reorganize the life, imparting to the soul the life eternal that is found in Jesus Christ. And what is the nature of this transforming experience that we call the new birth? We cannot tell all that is involved in it, for it is as deep as the mystery of life itself. We cannot penetrate into all the workings of God's Spirit, but we may note some of the central thoughts involved in the spiritual change.

The Changed Will

First, in the renewal of the human soul by the Spirit there is a change in the will; the will receives a new direction.[18] There comes in the place of the old disposition to center life's interests in self and in the world a positive movement toward God.[19] There is a shifting of the object of interest; the soul becomes intensely concerned in God and his kingdom; the spiritual world has become wonderfully attractive. Now, in the midst of life and its temptations, its complexities and its doubts and fears, the will

becomes reënforced with a new power, a power to resist the attractions, the temptations, and the power to concentrate the energies of life upon a great purpose. Now this is not mere wilfulness. There is such a thing as a powerful will in men who are not religious, but the regenerate man has his will strengthened to the fulfillment of spiritual ends; whereas he once yielded to the besetting sins of life and the power of social sin around, he now finds a resisting strength in the presence of these temptations.

The New Love of God

Second, the new life is characterized by a singular love for God.[20] The natural man may often be dominated by a certain sort of fear or terror concerning God and the eternal world, but the reborn soul discovers the attractiveness of God as revealed in Christ and loves him because God first loved him.[21] The love of God is shed abroad in the heart of the truly regenerate. Now, along with this wonderful interest in God there comes an unfailing interest in spiritual things.[22] The soul enters a new life; there are new interests, new purposes, new motives. It is the light of love that has so transformed the spirit as to fix the center of gravity in God, our Saviour.

The New Center

In the third place, in shifting the center of life from self to God the new man finds himself animated by love for the brethren. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."[23] Possibly one of the main characteristics of the new life is this strange concern for the spiritual welfare of other men. A world of values opens up to the soul that is made new in Christ Jesus. It is this powerful sense of kinship that animates and sustains the missionary in darkest heathenism. None but the regenerate will leave all that is dear and go to loneliness and alien conditions to pursue the tireless work of one who is to recover the darkened and besotted minds of the heathen to the liberty of the children of God.

Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness

The fourth characteristic of this new life is the creating within of the ceaseless desire for righteousness.[24] There is no passive admiration for a mere sentiment of religion, but there is a passionate hatred of evil and a quenchless thirst for righteousness. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."[25] "The pure in heart shall see God."[26] And thus it comes clearly to light that regeneration creates in the hearts of people a longing for holiness, for truth, for rightness, for cleanness, everything that can be expressed under the conception of moral purity. Regeneration is the beginning of life as it must be lived according to the Spirit and manner of Jesus Christ. To be regenerated means to have Christ formed within the soul.[27] So soon as we begin to live in the spirit and power of Jesus we have passed from death unto life.

How Be Born of the Spirit?

And how may this great change come to pass? It comes by the movement of God's Spirit toward us. He enters convincing, teaching, and moving the moral nature to act toward God.[28] It is God's action upon us; he is wooing us himself. His Spirit is awakening, and not only awakening, but there to empower, to enable the soul to lay hold of himself. When the human spirit responds to God's Spirit, yielding to his call, surrendering to his movement, and obeying his will, the new creation comes. In the Christian life all this centers in Jesus Christ. To accept Christ by a living faith is to accept the power that transforms the natural man into the spiritual man. Those in Christ Jesus are created anew, old things pass away. This life is the life from God. We can receive it; we cannot make it, we cannot create it, we cannot will it, but we can receive it.[29]

The Time for Regeneration

When may we be born of the Spirit? At any time when the soul responds to the coming of God's grace. The best time is as early as a child can be taught to love and obey

the Heavenly Father. There is no telling when the Holy Spirit may enter a human soul. But of one thing we may be sure: all children should be taught from the earliest moment that they can understand anything about God, that Jesus is their Saviour, and that they must trust him and yield their lives to the influences of the Holy Spirit and so pass into the Christian life to abide there as long as life shall last. This is the faith of childhood.

Many persons have been distressed because they could not date the time of their regeneration. This ought not so to be. Many of the holiest of God's children have been unable to tell the time of any great transition; as far back as memory goes they have loved God and tried to do his will. The great question with every one is whether he is now living in conscious devotion to God and in the realization of his peace.[30]

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[1] Ezekiel 11:19, 20; 36:25-27. [2] Jeremiah 31:31-34, with Hebrews 8:8-12. [3] John 3:3-5; Romans 6:4-6; Ephesians 2:5, 6; James 1:18. [4] Galatians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17. [5] Romans 6:4. [6] Colossians 3:3. [7] Matthew 18:3: Luke 22:32; James 5:20. [8] Greek: *palingenesia*; *palin*=again, gennao=to be born, *pass;* Titus 3:5. [9] Greek-*gennethe anothen*=born from above. [10] John 3:6. [11] 1 Corinthians 15:46. [12] 1 Corinthians 2:14. [13] Hebrews 11:1. [14] 1 Corinthians 10:31. [15] Romans 5:12, 18, 19. [16] Galatians 5:19-21. [17] James 4:2, 3. [18] Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 6:6. [19] Philippians 1:21. [20] Romans 5:5. [21] 1 John 4:19. [22] Galatians 1:15, 16. [23] 1 John 3:14-16. [24] Matthew 5:6. [25] 1 John 3:3. [26] Matthew 5:8. [27] Galatians 4:19. [28] John 16:8-11. [29] John 1: 12, 13. [30] Philippians 4:7.

Questions for Class Use

1. How is regeneration referred to in the Old Testament?

2. By what terms is this spiritual process referred to in the New Testament?

3. Examine the figurative term Jesus employed in teaching Nicodemus.

4. Is the unregenerated nature wholly passive in experiencing regeneration? or has it some power of responding to the gospel call? Is the old life altogether devoid of goodness? or does it possess certain virtues?

5. What are the four great effects produced in the experience of regeneration?

6. In what way may one obtain this great blessing and experience this transformation?

7. How is regeneration related to the stages of development of a human life and to one's consciousness of the change itself?

XI. SANCTIFICATION—THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—A Patriarchal Command to Perfection. Genesis 17:1-14.

Monday.—The Law of Love under the Dispensation of Law. Deuteronomy 10:12-11:1.

Tuesday.—The Vision of the Holy God Makes Holiness Imperative. Isaiah 6:1-12, with Luke 5:8.

Wednesday.—The Proof of Love in Obedience. John 14: 15-24; 1 John 4:16-21.

Thursday.—The Only Logical Conception of Life for the Forgiven and Renewed Soul. Romans 6.

Friday.—The Rule of the Perfect Life. Romans 12.

Saturday.—The Hymn of the Perfect Life. 1 Corinthians 13.

PRAYER

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

In general, the doctrinal teachings of Methodism on the great fundamental articles of the Christian faith are similar to those of the other evangelical Churches. But there are some differences. Among these differences I will point out two that have had a profound effect on the doctrine and the life of Methodists.

The first is the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, or assurance, as it is sometimes called in other Churches. When anyone seeks a license to preach, among other searching questions, he has to answer the following: "Do you know God as a pardoning God? Have you the love of God abiding in you?" These mean the inward witness in our hearts that our sins are forgiven.

Again, after a minister has served two years in the traveling ministry and seeks admission into full connection in the Annual Conference, he is called upon to answer other searching questions, among them the following: "Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?" Thus at the threshold of the minister's career he affirms his belief in the doctrine of perfect love. There are no differences in the religious experience required of a minister and of the laity. So every Methodist ought to ask himself the same questions.

Sanctification in Methodism

The creative power of John Wesley's religious experience grew out of his search for vital godliness. He soon saw that true religion was a matter of the soul's pure intention to live unto God supremely. How to do this became the passion of his life. He found other men of like mind, and together they formed "The Holy Club." In ridicule they were eventually called "Methodists," because of their persistent and methodical pursuit of a holy life. In the relaxed state of the Church and the doctrinal laxity of the time, they found it difficult to discover the right way of the Lord.

Mr. Wesley emphatically stated that the Methodist societies were raised up "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." It was not long before the people called Methodists were animated by the quest for heart purity and the experience of love made perfect. This was a lost doctrine and greatly contrary to the flesh; it was, and ever has been, opposed and perverted. Entire sanctification as a doctrine is taught by all orthodox Christian Churches, but they generally teach that it is experienced in the article of death or in some purgatorial condition in the unseen world. But Methodism has always taught that entire sanctification could be attained in the present life and has required its ministers to state that they believed this and desired to obtain the experience. It is one of the glories of Methodism to have recovered this lost doctrine of apostolic

Christianity and so to have presented it to the world as to cause other Christian bodies to seek a higher and richer Christian experience, even though rejecting in part the Methodist interpretation of the experience.

The Higher Life in the New Testament

In many places the New Testament contains specific teaching concerning this experience. The apostle Paul, in a number of places, called upon believers to advance to an experience of deeper and more abiding quality than they possessed. He frequently emphasizes the need and possibility of being established: "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father."[1] This corresponds to his words, "being rooted and grounded in love,"[2] and being "filled unto all the fullness of God."[3] We have here a state answering to the ideal of the Christian's high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But the classic passage is: "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."[4] In conversion God begins a good and gracious work in the soul, but he will continue this work in the process of sanctification. Now the quality of life that the apostle has in mind implies an established experience, marked by blameless character and the complete subjugation of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—to the law of holiness. It is a work wrought by the power of God, to which his fidelity is pledged. And it is a grace to be given to those who are in grace, already Christians. Indeed, it is a state possible to those only who have already obtained a living faith.[5]

The apostle John also has a doctrine of love which bears upon the same experience. The very essence of his statement of Christian experience is in the following passage: "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no

fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment: and he that feareth is not made perfect in love."[6] These words glow with the richness of a deeper experience of the better sort of Christians.

However, the most searching statement is the injunction of our Lord: "And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."[7] Now, the meaning of this great statement is that there is only one thing that can make Christian deeds and thoughts Christian, and that is the expression of love, love to God and love to man. This is an ideal to be realized, not merely aimed at. Take these words of Christ and interpret them in the terms of Paul's great hymn to the power of love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and you will get the measure of the state of grace which it is the duty and privilege of believers in Christ to attain.

Christ and Final Definition of Holiness

From beginning to end the Bible has one message to sinning men: "Be ye holy, for I am holy."[8] It is a call to holiness, and, like all God's commands, there is given with it the means to respond to it. The Bible ideal does not exceed the provision of God's grace.

But what is holiness? We know that it is the central quality of God's own nature. He has taught the race in various ways what holiness is not. Conscience is our first teacher here. But holiness is a deeper quality than any "thou shalt not" can cover: it is what you are that counts here. Now holiness is the quality of life revealed in Jesus Christ. He is the very likeness of God.[9] He has expressed holiness in the terms of human life. In Christ holiness expressed itself in a twofold way. First, in his positive devotion to God. To do the will of God was his meat and drink.[10] His highest joy was to be in communion with God.[11] Second, he gave himself for others.[12] He loved men

with a ceaseless purpose to save them from their sins. His patience knew no bounds.[13] There was an outpouring of interest and sympathy which sought expression in deeds of mercy and words of comfort and inspiration.

In such a life there was bound to be victory over evil and abiding peace of soul. A man's character is determined by the nature of the thing he loves. A worldly man is one who loves the things of the world; a sensual man is one who loves sensual things; a holy man is one whose supreme motive in life is determined by love to God and man. The highest purposes of his life center there, and all other interests are controlled from that center. Hence, love to man is the immediate fruit of loving God. A holy man begins to look at men as God does. He has an impartial interest in the souls of men. There is peace, forgiving grace toward others, and a quenchless desire to do good. To be sanctified is to have the Spirit of Jesus Christ rule in our hearts, to hold full sway, the Lord of every motion there.[14]

Jesus Christ Our Sanctification

Sanctification begins when we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Indeed, the best designation of the Christian life is the new life of Christ Jesus. When we enter into fellowship with Christ we become partners of his life. His spirit begins to rule in the heart. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."[15] The Spirit begins to work within us, reproducing the mind and heart of Christ in our character. The aim of the Christian salvation is to bring our nature into full conformity with the life of Christ, "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[16] Certain spiritual qualities, dispositions, manifest themselves in a normal Christian experience. They indicate that holiness has already begun to be realized in the life of the convert.

First, there is a desire for victory over sin.[17] And there is victory over sin, but it is not always as uniform in experience as it should be. There are times when the standard is felt to fall. For example, a person whose besetting sin is a hot temper loses self-control and is betrayed into

hasty speech or a resentful spirit. There is defeat where there ought to be victory.

Second, the normal Christian is animated by an intense hunger and thirst for righteousness.[18] One of the surest evidences of a truly converted soul is the desire for a deeper, firmer hold upon the things of God. Jesus said: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The presence of the Spirit of Christ in the heart begets a desire for utter purity of soul. "And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."[19] There is no true Christián life without this diligent pursuit of holiness. It is one of the marks of the new creature in Christ Jesus.[20]

In the third place, a genuinely converted person has in general a faith that leans on God in times of trial. There is an emancipation from fear. He knows that his only hope is in God's care. And all his efforts aim at complete submission and constant trust.[21]

The most important characteristic of the new life is the presence of a new motive. Love for God and man begins to give meaning to life as a whole.[22] A love that keeps his commandments is the Master's test of a truly religious life.[23] Only such as love and do his will can be said to possess Christ. All this is essential to holiness, and all this in some measure is possessed by all true Christians. The more Christ rules in our hearts, the more completely do we realize these graces of character. It is the very quality of Christ's life reproduced in us that constitutes our sanctification. Paul yearned for his converts, desiring that Christ "be formed" in them.[24] Christ, then, is the very form or manner or habit that the soul must put on. We must be conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son. This is the ideal, the end and fruition of a growing faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour.[25]

Hindrances

However glowing the early life of a Christian may be, he soon finds that there are hindrances within as well as without. There are elements of discord in his nature not

yet subjugated to the law of Christ. As life's duties and trials come upon him, he becomes aware of a deeper problem in his soul. He knows more about himself. The old nature seems to have left surviving antagonisms, imperfectly moralized elements of character. Whatever the cause, he finds an imperfect trust in God and a failure of the noblest motives in dealing with himself and others. Life's experiences lead to larger discoveries in self; the scope of God's law is seen to be a far more spiritual and penetrating thing than appeared at first. But, above all, the Christian finds that love does not always animate the heart. Religious work and the means of grace are pursued from motives of fear rather than love. The sense of duty makes us say that we will be loyal to Christ, but the effort is a struggle and hardly a victory. The motive is often imperfect because love is not supreme. What we need is perfect love that will cast out fear and hold the heart true to its trust. It also means a love that sees more perfectly what God's will for us really is. An imperfect faith and an imperfect consecration hinder the fullest experience of love.

Pursuing Holiness

Christians usually pursue the better life under the influence of a general longing for a richer, fuller life. Sometimes it is stimulated by the felt need of overcoming some besetting sin. But in general the motives are found in a longing for purity of intention, peace, perfect peace, or power to do God's work. In a word, simply a desire to be like Christ.[26]

It is a call, first of all, for an utter consecration of self and all that one has to God. It may be that we think we have done this, but sometimes we need to make a deeper inspection of life's pursuits and estimate more perfectly the measure of our actual surrender to God.

It is, next, a yearning for deliverance from besetting sins. It aims at complete victory. This grows in intensity as we press on toward the goal. As we do this, there will be a growing knowledge of the nature of temptation and a clearer vision of the holy life.

There is, chief and greatest of all, a desire to possess God for his own sake; that God may take complete possession of soul and body and rule entirely the heart and life. Along this way there is growing conviction of the power of Christ to save. There is a reaching out to a view of Christ as one who can save to the uttermost. There is also an experience from time to time of great blessings, not one or two, but many, even according to our faith and fuller apprehension of the promises of God.

The Test of Holiness

The measure of our experience is simply the measure of our consecration and faith. Only God knows our hearts perfectly, and he alone can tell when all our soul's desire is fixed in him. We cannot tell it by our feelings merely, nor by the richness of this or that blessing. It is measured solely by love, and love is measured by its works.

We need not hope to be freed from the fact of temptation nor from the infirmities of ignorance and the limitations of our imperfect human faculties. We shall make mistakes. But we can hope for a work of grace by which the soul's pure intention is settled and fixed in God and in which peace that passeth understanding shall keep heart and mind through Christ Jesus.[27]

This is the faith of the Bible, and the special message of Methodism is that Christians seek and expect perfect love in this life. Can we doubt the power of Christ to do this when all the conditions are met? Let every earnest soul seek the fuller knowledge of the things of God and press on to the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

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[1] 1 Thessalonians 3:13. [2] Ephesians 3:17. [3] Ephesians 3:19. [4] 1 Thessalonians 5:23. [5] Jude 3:20-21. [6] 1 John 4:1, 5:3 [7] Matthew 20:37. [8] Leviticus 20:7; 1 Peter 1:15. [9] Hebrews 1:3. [10] John 4:32. [11] Matthew 11:25. [12] Matthew 20:28. [13] Luke 15:10. [14] Romans 8:9. [15] Romans 8:14. [16] Ephesians 4:13. [17] 1 John 3:5, 6. [18] Matthew 5:6. [19] 1 John 3:3. [20] Hebrews 6:1-3. [21] 1 Timothy 4:10. [22] 1 John 4:16-19. [23] John 14:23, 24. [24] Galatians 4:19. [25] Ephesians 4:11-15. [26] Ephesians 3:8-10. [27] Philippians 4:7.

Questions for Class Use

1. What two doctrines of the Christian life have received especial recognition and emphasis in Methodist teaching?

2. How did the doctrine and experience of perfect love become a feature of Methodism; and how is Methodist teaching in this particular different from that of other evangelical Churches?

3. By what terms does the New Testament usually describe the higher life of Christians?

4. How is holiness manifested in the life of Christ?

5. In what sense is Jesus Christ our sanctification?

6. What hindrances does the Christian find within his own heart as he endeavors to live the new life in Christ?

7. What is the dominant motive for the pursuit of holiness?

8. What is the test of holiness?

XII. THE RESURRECTION

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Old Testament Foundations for the Doctrine of the Resurrection. Job 19:22-27; Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14; Daniel 12:2; Psalms 16:8-11; 17:15.

Monday.—The Folly of Skepticism Concerning the Resurrection. Mark 12:18-27.

Tuesday.—Holy Life, Comforting Promise, Stern Duty. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; Colossians 3:1-7.

Wednesday.—A Spiritual Interpretation of the Resurrection. Romans 6.

Thursday.—Apostolic Preaching of the Resurrection. Acts 2:22-36; 3:13-16; 26:6-8.

Friday.—The Great Resurrection Argument (1). 1 Corinthians 15:1-34.

Saturday.—The Great Resurrection Argument (2). 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

PRAYER

Almighty and Everlasting God, who, of thy tender love toward mankind, has sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility, Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Methodist Sunday Service Book.)

THE doctrine of the resurrection is older than Christianity. It was held as a fundamental article of faith by the majority of the Jews at the time of our Lord's ministry.[1] The Jews of Christ's day represented the hopes and convictions of generations of religious teaching. Some of the great prophets have foregleams of the victory over death which became the main expectation of a more mature time.[2] Jesus recognized and appealed to the truth of the resurrection doctrine when he answered the criticism of the Sadducees, who denied it as well as the existence of angels and the immortality of the soul.[3] He said of them, "They

know not the scriptures nor the power of God"; and then he adds: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living."[4] In his conversation with Martha at the grave of Lazarus he said, "Thy brother shall rise again," and she replied, expressing the faith of her people: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life."[1]

Jesus not only recognized the truth of the resurrection, he confirmed it and gave it a new significance. "Life and immortality" are brought to light by the gospel.[5] By his own resurrection and revelation of the power of life he established its truth, revealed something of its nature, and answered the perplexities of men concerning the ultimate meaning of death.[6]

The Resurrection of Jesus

The Christian faith is built upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."[7] The first Christians made this the supreme thing in their testimony concerning Christ and his salvation.[8] There are two main reasons for the preëminence of the resurrection of our Lord. It was his vindication as the Son of God and Saviour of sinful men,[9] and it is God's answer to man's supreme question as to his own future existence.[10] These are the main issues for us: have we a divine Saviour, and what is the meaning of death?

The fact of the resurrection of Jesus rests upon a firm foundation. We cannot account for the triumphant faith of the first disciples without it. His death had filled them with fear and disappointment.[11] They had fixed their hopes in the presence and power of a visible Messiah, but instead they had buried these hopes in his tomb. The shepherd was slain and the sheep were scattered. A conquering faith could not be proclaimed by a band of perplexed and dispirited disciples. They were appalled by his tragic end and bewildered by the thought of his greatness sinking in the shadows of death. But all this suddenly

changed. The atmosphere became charged with life and hope. Death yielded the secret of its power, and the Son of God claimed his own. The disciples were soon proclaiming with certainty and courage the fact of their Master's reappearance.[12]

The testimony is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the disciples persistently failed to understand the Lord's teaching concerning the necessity for his death and resurrection. "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?"[13] They had expected him to restore the visible kingdom of Israel and reign as an earthly monarch, bringing in an empire of righteousness by his earthly presence.

The Early Testimony

The disciples testified that on the third day the tomb was empty.[14] On the same day he was seen by a number of his disciples.[15] From that day on for forty days, at various intervals and under a variety of circumstances, he was recognized by groups of his disciples.[16] On one occasion he was manifested to above five hundred disciples, the greater part of whom were living when St. Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians.[17] The resurrection faith was not a result of a mere vision or the hallucination of diseased minds. Luke tells us that Jesus showed himself alive by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.[16]

The disciples gave their testimony to the resurrection of Jesus with power. There was intensity of conviction. They were made over by the fact. Perplexity gave way to certainty, and fear was banished by courage, the courage of conviction. There was a new power in them, a power that reached others. Men were not able to resist the energy of their testimony. Reject they might, but deny it they could not. But those who received their testimony soon became conscious of a new life within themselves. Jesus became part of their own deepest experience. They shared in the resurrection power.[18]

A fact like this is sure evidence of the need of such a faith. Jesus knew that nothing short of the resurrection would overcome the power of sin and death. His claim as Saviour depended upon it. It answers a great need. It meets the challenge of death. This fact and the experience of Christ's life in their own lives made the early Christians invincible. Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come could separate them from their consciousness of union with their living Lord.[19]

The General Resurrection

The New Testament asserts in many places that "there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust."[20] St. Paul declares that the resurrection of believers is inseparable from the resurrection of Jesus Christ.[21] In 1 Corinthians the apostle answers the man who raises the question, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"[22] To-day the same questions are asked. Men wish to know how such a thing can be, and what does it mean, and why should it be necessary. How, what, and why? "How are the dead raised?" We cannot penetrate into the ultimate mystery of the resurrection because it is an event of which we have no experience and that belongs to the higher and more spiritual manifestations of almighty power. The mystery of life itself is beyond our present knowledge. However, it is possible for us to get some idea of the meaning of this great fact. The New Testament is full of it, and the resurrection of Jesus gives us the key by which we open the door into this realm of mystery and divine power.

We wonder how there can be a renewal of our physical organism after it has been resolved into its original elements. In what sense can the sea give up its dead and the earth restore our temporal bodies? First of all, the answer is in the fact that we have not yet understood nor exhausted the power of God. Indeed, we have not penetrated far into the realm of nature. New discoveries like the X-ray and wireless telegraphy speak of new interpretations of the nature of matter. The modern physicist speaks of matter

in terms of energy rather than mere masses of physical substance.

St. Paul challenged Agrippa with the question, "Why is it judged a thing incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?"[23] We have only found a new form of manifestation of God's power. The how of the resurrection is only a matter of the power of God. No man can explain the creative power of God. This we know has happened, for life and being is all about us. Why cannot the same God who made natural life call into being a new order of life by giving to the spirit of man a spiritual body?

The Resurrection Body

Our first question is involved in the second, "With what body do they come?" What sort of a body are we to have? Light is thrown on this question by the accounts given of the resurrection body of Jesus, and for this reason I have postponed the consideration of the nature of our Lord's resurrection body until now. St. Paul connects the two resurrections, the one depends upon the other: "If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised."[24] The apostle tells us that the risen Christ is "the first fruits of them that slept." All this rests upon the great doctrine that our Lord was made truly man, sharing our nature and dying for us a real death. This gives us a clew to our quest. What was true for him is true for us, because he possessed a truly human life. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."[25] Christ, as the second Adam, comes to bring in the power of a new life. He brings the power of the resurrection and shows us the way.

The resurrection body of Jesus was the same and yet changed. It was not visible to everybody, and only under special conditions was it visible to his own followers. On certain occasions he appeared in a room and vanished as suddenly as he came, seemingly without regard to wall and doors. The ordinary conditions of our bodies did not control his movements or visibility.[26] Finally he vanished from their presence into the world beyond.[27] Clearly there

was a difference between his resurrection body and that of Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. The body of Jesus went through some transforming process by which it became glorified, spiritualized, transcending the ordinary conditions of time and space. The elements of earthly form were transformed by the power of the resurrection life.

St. Paul is very positive in stating that the resurrection body is different in character from corruptible body.[28] He brings this out by a series of vivid contrasts. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: . . . it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. . . . As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."[29] The apostle illustrates his thought by an analogy from nature. As seed sown in the ground decays so that the living germ may come forth in the new plant, so the death of the earthly body makes way for a new, spiritual body.[30] As the earthy body is suited to the conditions of life now, so the spiritual body will be adapted to the conditions of a more spiritual life hereafter.

From this teaching it seems that we need not perplex our minds about the restoration of the identical particles of matter contained in the dying body. We are told that every particle of matter in our bodies is changed in a few years, so that we are not the same substance we were a few years ago. But the form is there, the mysterious organ of personality is preserved and renewed as the years go by. So there will be given us a new form, essentially like the old form, but new, free from corruption and death, spiritual and glorious, adapted to the conditions of life everlasting. We cannot understand how this can be done, but there is no reason why it cannot be. Paul tells us that our Saviour "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able to subject all things unto himself."[31]

The Need for a Body

Why need there be a resurrection? Is it not sufficient for the spirit to live on without any body, simply a pure spirit? The answer is not far to seek. First, we were originally created with a body. A body is necessary for the development of human personality.[32] It seems that something more than pure spirit is necessary to constitute us persons. It is in the body that we find ourselves and work out our destiny. The death of the body is felt to be a break in our personal existence. Death has always been an enigma and a challenge to men. We cling to the body with a strange and wistful faith. We remember our friends by the outlines of the human form and the character revealed in the lines of the face and the attitudes of the body. The body takes on an expression that reveals the soul within and mental characteristics wrought into physical form point the way to an interpretation of human life.

St. Paul indicates the reason for the need of a body. He speaks of the body as "the earthly house of our tabernacle" being dissolved—that is, passing away in death and leaving the spirit "unclothed." He cannot entertain the idea of naked spirit, but longs for the heavenly body, the spiritual tabernacle, which takes the place of the worn-out shell which we cast aside by life's unresting sea.

Perhaps we can get something of the idea in this way. We live by two fundamental laws. First, is the law of self-preservation. Men instinctively appropriate what is necessary to support life. But this is not the main thing; we also need to express ourselves. Self-expression is a fundamental need. The body is the organ of self-expression. The soul is developed and trained in the use of the body. Our entire civilization is a product of the law of self-expression. So Paul felt that there would be need of a body for the fullest expression of the spirit's life in any world. So Jesus manifested himself in his resurrection body. In it he conquered the power of death and revealed the glory of his redeeming life. Even so we shall need to be clothed with a medium of self-expression and so

enter the company of redeemed men with death fully conquered.

The Resurrection Day

When will this great transformation come to pass? Some say that at death men take on a spiritual body, which is the body of the resurrection. This, however, does not seem to meet with the teaching of the Scriptures, in which the resurrection is connected with the second coming of Christ.[34] It is true that there are many comings of Christ, and surely he comes to receive believers at the time of death. He clearly said: "I will come again and receive you unto myself."[35] But the Scriptures point forward to a great day, or probably epoch, in which the risen Lord will manifest his power, during which time the present dispensation shall be brought to its close and the triumphant kingdom of God be established over every hostile power.[36] "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death."[37] We have no means of exactly conceiving such marvelous events or the spiritual and historic setting they may take. The great predictions of the prophets were not understood until the things of which they spoke came to pass. Neither can we forecast such profound changes as are involved in the transformation of the present order into the permanent spiritual kingdom of the Son of God. It is sufficient to say that the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that in our own order and in God's good time we shall share in his glory.

Meantime, according to Paul, the saints are present with the Lord. The apostle declared that he desired to depart and be with Christ.[38] He evidently looked forward to a period of more immediate apprehension of his Lord in what may be called an intermediate state. It is certain that he confidently expected to be at peace and in the presence of his Lord. As he viewed death near in his prospective martyrdom he gave his great confession of faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only but to all them that have loved his appearing."[39] The Scriptures do not furnish any information concerning the great interval between death and the consummation of all things. There is no justification for either the idea of a so-called soul sleep or the fires of purgatorial purification. It is a realm which God has reserved in his own power. This is our day of preparation, and yonder, across the epochs of time, is the day of his final revelation in his saints.[40] The prospect is glorious. We believe in the resurrection because Jesus rose and has promised that we shall share in his resurrection power. And we shall then be like him, for we shall see him as he is.[41]

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[1] John 11:24. [2] Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:23. [3] Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8. [4] Matthew 22:31, 32. [5] 1 Timothy 1:10. [6] 1 Corinthians 15:20. [7] Romans 1:4. [8] Acts 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4*ff*. [9] Acts 13:33; 17:3, 31; 26:23. [10] Job 14:14 with John 14:9. [11] Luke 24;18, 21. [12] Luke 24:52, 53; Acts 2:14; 3:12-18. [13] Luke 24:25, 26; Matthew 16; 22, 23. [14] Matthew 28:8. [15] Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:12, 14. [16] Luke 24:36; John 21:1*ff*; Acts 1:3, 4. [17] 1 Corinthians 15:5-8. [18] Acts 2:41; Colossians 3:1. [19] Romans 8:31-39. [20] Acts 24:15. [21] 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14. [22] 1 Corinthians 15:34. [23] Acts 26:8. [24] 1 Corinthians 15: 13-16. [25] 1 Corinthians 15:22. [26] Luke 24:36; John 20:15, 19. [27] Acts 1:9, 10. [28] 1 Corinthians 15:36, 37, 44. [29] 1 Corinthians 15:42-54. [30] 1 Corinthians 15: 37, 38. [31] Philippians 3:21. [32] Genesis 1:26, 27 with 2:7. [33] 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. 5:1-5. [34] Matthew 25:31; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 54. [35] John 15:2. [36] Thessalonians 4:13-18. [37] 1 Corinthians 15:25. [38] Philippians 1:23. [39] 2 Timothy 4:8. [40] Hebrews 9:27, 28. [41] 1 John 3:2.

Questions for Class Use

1. What was the belief among the Jews of the time of Jesus concerning the resurrection of the body? and what was the source of their belief?

2. Give your reasons for believing that the resurrection of Jesus is an unshakable fact. What is the significance of this fact for Christian faith?

3. What is to be the extent or scope of the general resurrection? With what future event is it associated?

4. How do you answer the question of the Corinthian skeptics: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

5. Is human life under a fundamental need of a body? If so, why? Would not pure spirit be an adequate mode of existence?

6. Are we permitted to believe that the saints immediately after death become endowed with a spiritual body? If not, what is their state? Do you find ground for "soul sleeping" or "purgatory" in the Bible?

XIII. THE LIFE EVERLASTING

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday.—Psalms of Immortal Hope. Psalm 49: 71.

Monday.—Assumption of Saints of the Elder Time into the Heaven of the Blessed. Genesis 5:23, 24; 2 Kings 2:1-11.

Tuesday.—Jesus's Estimate of the Value of the Soul. Matthew 10:28-42; 16:24-28.

Wednesday.—Everlasting Life and Its Source. John 6:47-71.

Thursday.—Eternal Life and Its Dreadful Opposite. Romans 2:1-12, 16.

Friday.—Apostolic Confidence in the Future Blessedness. 2 Corinthians 5:1-21.

Saturday.—The Promise of an Entrance Into Everlasting Blessedness. 2 Peter 1:1-21.

PRAYER

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord and with whom the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity, we give thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. And we beseech thee, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy name may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer.)

A CERTAIN British officer, who had taken part in some of the great battles in India late in life, was relating some of his most striking experiences to a group of his friends. They were thrilled with his simple account of battle and danger and hair-breadth escapes. At last he paused to say: "I expect to see something much more remarkable than anything I have been describing." This awakened the keenest interest among his hearers; then he said: "I mean in the first five minutes after death."

This suggestive remark reminds us that death is the

most startling challenge to all our thinking. What happens after the great transition from life, as we know it, to the unseen world is a matter of supreme moment to all thoughtful men. A religious creed which failed to say anything concerning the significance of death would be feeble indeed. Faith cannot escape the responsibility for giving some kind of meaning to death; so there are several allusions to the fact in the Apostles' Creed. It affirms belief in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. Also the article concerning the communion of saints involves the fellowship of the people of God who have left the present scene.

The belief in immortality is not original in Christianity; it is found among practically all races of mankind. It is doubtful whether any tribe exists without some sort of belief in the survival of human personality after death. It may be a very crude form of belief, such, for example, as provides food and the utensils of life for the use of the dead in or near their graves. Evidently the mind in such a cause is unable to grasp the fact of the utter separation of the soul from the body. In many forms of the primitive belief in immortality there is a distinct teaching of the doctrine of future rewards and penalties conditioned upon the character of the life lived on earth.

Man the Immortal

We have a firm belief in the immortality of human personality, because we believe that man is created in the image of God.[1] He resembles God in that he possesses certain powers which are essential in a personal being. He is capable of moral responsibility, ethical love, endless progress in knowledge, and the attainment of holy love. He is capable of knowing God and fulfilling God's will. The very greatness of the human spirit has forced upon men the reality of their immortal nature. This has been the inevitable issue of the fact of death. Immortality is not demonstrable; it is a fact that can be doubted, and there have been individuals who have doubted it. Being a spiritual and moral fact, it depends upon evidences

of a higher sort than are needed to support the reality of physical facts. It appeals to the spiritual and moral elements in human character and must be vindicated there. The evidence is inward, but none the less real. It is personal rather than general; it appeals to the higher judgments of the mind.

The Prophetic Cry of the Soul

All men must face the fact of death; there must be an instinctive reaction in view of such a personal experience. The natural human cry is a longing for personal survival, and, still more, a yearning for those who have gone before. We cannot believe that our dead are no more. The persistence of this belief is a witness to the soul's consciousness of its own value. We are not such stuff as dreams are made of. There is a spiritual quality, an essentially creative power in men which asserts itself even in the presence of pain and unaccountable disaster. The triumph of plain people over the difficulties and sorrows along the path of human progress reveals the greatness of the spirit that is in man.

> "Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
> Thou madest man, he knows not why,
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And thou hast made him: thou art just."

The consciousness of immortal hope is not a mere yearning of the lower types of men, ignorant, superstitious, animated by spectral fears; it has been the belief and hope of the highest spirits among us. The greatest sages of the past have affirmed their belief in the reality of the unseen world. The noblest thinkers of ancient Greece thought their way through to the conclusion of Socrates that the hope of the future was a glorious venture. He believed it because it grasped the greatness of the soul. The same thing is illustrated by all classes of great men. Poets such as Dante, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning have been prophets of the immortal hope. Also men of action, great statesmen, and leaders of men have dared to venture their lives on the program that embraced eternity itself.

Many of our greatest scientists have taken the position that the doctrine of immortality is the only adequate explanation of a rational universe. Whatever road we take, this belief presses upon us. It is the prophetic voice which Almighty God has given to his children, the inborn cry of their nature, and it cannot be denied without great loss. Wherever men suppress this cry or ignore its moral demand, they pay the penalty in the loss of motive power and great moral elevation, life shrinks into a narrow range, the vision splendid fades away. There is little to sustain in sorrow and less to animate with hope for the future of the individual or the race.

The Value of the Soul

Dr. Martineau has pointed out the utter wastefulness there would be in the extinction of great minds; they are the product of the creative power of God; they have been enriched by knowledge and experience, polished by culture, and so fitted for the highest ministries. It would seem strange if mere particles of matter should go on, preserved in endless existence, mere physical substances and insensate forces persisting in manifold forms, while the minds of the great and good are extinguished as the blowing out of a candle. We cannot entertain the thought that they have ceased to be.

This is nothing in comparison with the value placed upon the soul by the coming of Jesus Christ. There is, first of all, his own value. Such a life as his possesses eternal significance; his wisdom, goodness, and sense of nearness to God are ineffaceable values. To say that such qualities simply fade and such a life resolves into nothingness is incredible. It is to assert that the craft and cruelty of sin have vanquished the lofty spirit and terminated the very existence of the most godlike persons the world has ever seen.

As he valued himself, so Christ valued others. "He came to seek and to save that which was lost."[2] He saw in men the hope of likeness to his Heavenly Father. He put all the weight of his mission on the recovering of the

lost. For him the relationship between God and the soul was eternal. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."[3] Jesus did not admit the possibility of the soul ceasing to be; Jesus gave a new conception of the value of the soul.[4] In this way he has confirmed the natural sense of immortality which men have realized in their own effort to find the meaning and purpose of life.

Life Newly Defined

Jesus Christ has given a new meaning to life. He has also given a new meaning to immortality; he has said: "Because I live, ye shall live also."[5] In the older thought of the race immortality was mainly survival after death.[6] Jesus adds a new quality to the life; it is not merely eternal as a matter of duration, but is life of a higher order. The life everlasting is a peculiarly blessed life; it is more than continued existence.[7]

On the one hand, it is life emancipated from the power of sin and the limitations of an imperfect world; on the other hand, it is a life enriched by a free and full fellowship with God, which is the source of all life.[8] No one has yet made a satisfactory definition of life. The modern scientist defines it as a perfect correspondence between a living organism and its environment. The plant absorbs from earth and air the elements needful for its growth. Animals derive their nutriment from other living things. Fullness of life is the fuller use of the proper elements found in the environment. To fall out of correspondence means death; a man cannot live without air, water, and food. But the fact of the greatest importance is the fact that there is in living things a power that enables them to lay hold of and take into themselves the nutritive elements found in the environment. It is the vital power that counts, and this power remains a mystery. So in the spiritual life; it is a power that lays hold of God and enables a person to abide in him. The life everlasting is the immortal life of man raised to a new and higher power. It comes to us by spiritual renewal; it is not the natural gift of our common birth into the human family. Our natural birth makes us potentially

capable of eternal life. A man may exist beyond death and yet be devoid of the life of which the Creed speaks.

Fellowship in the Life Eternal

Eternal life is found in the soul's union of fellowship with God. Jesus said: "And this is life eternal that they should know thee, the only true God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."[9] To know God, then, is to have eternal life, and this knowledge and this life are found in his Son, even Jesus Christ. There are three things that help to explain this view of the life everlasting. First, it consists of a personal knowledge of God; the soul is very sure of God. It is not a matter of second-hand testimony or logical inference, but an immediate and personal conviction that God is.[10] In the inmost depths of his soul the redeemed man is sure of God. The future blessedness of the immortal state will be in the fact that each shall know God personally.[11] The hindrances of our present limited life will be removed, and then shall we know him even as we are known.

The second point to be noted is that this knowledge of God is attended by a real enjoyment of him. It is not an apprehension of God filled with fear, but the source of deep joy;[12] hence the life everlasting consists in a genuine love of God. "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him."[13] This is the source of the joy in God which the Christian possesses. In Christ we realize the beauty and glory of holiness as revealed in the Father. This is the glory of our faith; in Christ we enjoy God as our Redeemer and Friend. He is a delight, interesting the intellect, the heart; he causes a hunger for moral beauty, for righteousness which brings a degree of satisfaction here, but we can never be satisfied until we "awake with his likeness."[14] In the world to come the Christian shall be like God, for he shall see him as he is."

In the third place, the result of this communion with God in Christ is a growing likeness to God; the soul is transformed into the same image.[15] We grow like the things we love and enjoy; we are transformed by the things

that we love. In fellowship with God our personal life takes on his moral likeness; we share in the motives and inspirations and joys of the divine life. This is the consummation of our redemption, and it is the full fruition of his fellowship with God that constitutes the life everlasting referred to in the Apostles' Creed. It begins on earth, but comes to full blossom after death, where communion with God will be unbroken and all our nature will be brought into perfect harmony with the spiritual order.

It remains to forecast the life everlasting on the basis of this fellowship as revealed in Jesus Christ. It means the perfecting of the permanent elements of human personality. Whatever is essential in our nature will there be preserved and enriched; whatever is transient and limited to the needs of this physical order will cease to be. Having fulfilled its function, it will be laid aside.

The life everlasting will be life indeed, which is to say that it will involve not merely a contemplation of God and the beauties of the spiritual order, but must be an employment of our noblest powers in the execution of the will of God. Heaven will not be an idle scene, but a state of glorious activity, fulfilling God's purposes in unrestricted delight. Neither can it be conceived of as merely individual life; it is a fellowship not only with God, but with like-minded spirits. We share in the employment and services of the spirits of just men made perfect,[16] and so the round of our redemption is made complete. We are living now with a view to that day and that hour, and we shall enter upon the inheritance of the saints in light,[17] enriched and prepared for a nobler service than we have ever known on earth.

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[1]Genesis 1:26, 27. [2]Luke 19:10. [3] Mark 12:26. [4] Matthew 16:26. [5] John 14:19. [6] Job 14:14. [7] John 20:31. [8] 2 Corinthians 5:1. [9] John 17:3. [10] Hebrews 11:6. [11] John 3:1, 2. [12] Romans 5:11. [13] 1 John 1:16. [14] Psalm 17:15. [15] 2 Corinthians 3:18. [16] Hebrews 12:23. [17] Colossians 1:12.

Questions for Class Use

1. Why should a religious creed contain an article relating to survival after death?

2. What is the character of the evidence for immortality? Is survival after death capable of being proved with the absoluteness of mathematics?

3. Facing the fact of death as a universal experience, what hope does the voice of the heart express?

4. How are the quality and the value of the soul related to the hope of immortality?

5. What new meaning does Jesus give to immortality?

6. What three experiences are involved in the fellowship of life eternal?

7. In what sense is the life to come continuous with this life? In what sense does it break with this?

NOTE ON THE CREED

THE word Creed is derived from "credo" (I believe), the first word of an ancient statement of the faith of the Church. The Creed was used first as a form of confession by candidates for baptism, also as a basis of instruction of those who sought baptism and membership in the Christian society. During early persecutions the ability to recite this form of confession was taken as a proof of membership in the Church, a sort of countersign, and the Creed was thus termed a symbol (from the Greek, *sumbolon*, meaning a pass word.) From these uses the Creed came to be regarded as a rule of faith (another meaning of the same Greek word *sumbolon*), and in the "historical" Churches it has that effect to-day.

As a confession required of those about to be baptized, the germ of the Creed is in the words of the Ethiopian: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8: 37: a verse omitted from the Revised Version.) But the faith into which one was to be baptized, according to Jesus's command, required instruction concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19. See the "Table" that follows.)

To what extent and in what form these germs of a creed had been expanded when the books of the New Testament were written it is impossible to say. The date of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, the earliest of the New Testament writings, is A.D. 52, and the Gospel according to Matthew was written between 60 and 70 A.D. But as Churches in Asia and Europe had been formed before the earliest of these dates, it can hardly be doubted that a succinct statement of the teaching of the apostles was in use, comprising belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ his only Son, and the Holy Spirit, together with the main facts of the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and the promise of his coming again. It may be that to such a confession of faith Paul alludes: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain bab-

blings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." (1 Tim. 6: 20.) But the earliest date on which we find anything closely conforming with the symbol we know as the Apostles' Creed (but which was certainly not made by the apostles) is A.D. 250, when the New Testament had long been completed and accepted as the rule of the apostolic faith. Augustine, one of the most noted of the fathers of the Roman Church, who died in A.D. 430, expounded the Apostles' Creed in the Latin form in which we now have it, except that the statement, "He descended into hell" (or the place of departed spirits) is not referred to by him. This article, therefore, may be regarded as the latest part of the Creed, but is not, therefore, to be repudiated as non-apostolic; for whatever authority may reside in the Creed is not due directly to the authority of the apostles, for they wrote no part of it, but to its conformity with the New Testament.

What, then, is the authority of the Apostles' Creed over the faith of Christians? None whatever, save as it embodies the teachings of Holy Scripture. In the Fifth Article of Religion—Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation"—the Methodist Confession of Faith declares: "*Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*" The specific passages upon which each of the several articles of the Apostles' Creed is based are developed under their proper subjects in this book.

What purpose does the Creed serve if, as just stated, it carried no authority other than that of the Scriptures? It has several very important uses. First, it connects the faith of the Church of to-day with that of the Church of the early Christian centuries; and, at the same time, as it is held by most Christian bodies, in some cases with immaterial variations, especially in the Greek Orthodox Church, it is a bond of union that underlies the many divisions of Christendom. Its statement, "I believe in the holy catholic Church," accepted by Christians of many

denominations, is proof that there is a "holy catholic Church." Even those denominations of recent Protestants who repudiate the Creed, do so only as denying its authority, not its truth. In conversation with a member of the Church of the Disciples, I asked, "Do you repudiate the Creed?" He replied affirmatively. I then recited to him severally each of the articles of the Creed, asking in each case whether his denomination believed that statement. He replied in each case that such was his own belief and that of his Church. I asked what objection there could be to the use of a statement of belief to which they assented. He answered that it was not to the statement of truths that all confessed, but to the authority of the form of confession. But other Protestant bodies do not regard the Creed as a source of authority, while they do realize in it a bond of unity.

In the second place, the Apostle's Creed is a convenient form for the confession of faith of those to be baptized and for the congregation when assembled in the church for worship. It is, therefore, declarative of the faith of the Church.

Third, the Apostles' Creed lays down a broad basis of Christian toleration within the circle of accepted essentials. It is fundamental, and therefore enables the Church to conserve the "faith once delivered in Jesus Christ our Lord," without imposing particular doctrines that belong to passing phases of theology upon succeeding generations. Every Church teaches much more than is contained in the Creed, but no Church needs require that more be accepted than is contained in these eleven articles. In the Roman Catholic Church the Apostles' Creed, and its later amplifications, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, are used as tests of orthodoxy coördinate with the Holy Scriptures; but such tests are illogical in Protestantism, which bases its teaching upon the authority of the Bible alone, and invites every believer for himself to "study the Scripture whether these things be so." (Acts 17:11.)

No new creed could serve the valuable ends that have been stated, for the simple reason that undivided Christen-

dom, the Church at the source, is no more and cannot come again. Many and great advances there have been and will continue to be in Christian theology; but they all fit well into the Creed, which continues to set forth in the most ancient, universal, and convenient form, "a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." (Luke 1:1.)

Amplifications of the Apostles' Creed have been made in order to refute heresy. The Arian heresy of the Fourth Century, that Jesus Christ is merely the most exalted of created beings, was the occasion of the adoption of the Nicene Creed by the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325. It is recited in the English and American Episcopal Churches on Christmas Day. It was not retained by John Wesley in his abridgment of the English liturgy for the Sunday Service Book of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, but has since been restored in the liturgy of the British Wesleyan Church. The Athanasian Creed is a metaphysical definition of the deity of Jesus Christ, incomprehensible by anybody and ending with a damnatory clause against anyone who does not "firmly and faithfully hold" its hairsplitting distinctions. In the Sunday Service Book Wesley retained the article of the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell" (or the place of departed spirits); but it disappeared from the Book of "Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church," although, as is shown in the accompanying table of belief, it is in accord with the teaching of the apostles.

A TABLE OF THE ARTICLES OF THE CREED* DERIVED FROM THE UTTERANCES OF OUR LORD AND THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES

Articles of Belief	God the Father	God the Son	God the the Holy Spirit	The Passion	Descent into Hell	Resurrection	Ascension	Second Coming	Repentance	Remission of sins.	The Church
Matthew 28	19	19	19			10	Mark 16: 19				Matt. 28: 19, 20
Luke 24	49	49	49 Acts 1:4, 8	46	Acts 2: 24, 31	Luke 24: 46	51 Acts 1:9	Acts 1: 11	Luke 24: 47	47	49 Acts 1:8
John 20	17	17	22			9, 20, 28	17	21: 22		20: 23	20:21–23
Peter, Acts 2	17	22, 33, 34	17, 33, 38	23		24, 31, 32	33		38	38	32
Acts 3	13	13, 15		15		15	21	19–21	19, 26	19	15
Acts 4	24	12, 27–30		10, 27		10					
Acts 5	30	31	32	30		30	31		31	31	32
Acts 10	34–36	38	38	39		40, 41		42		43	41, 42
Stephen, Acts 7	2, 32, 37, 55	52, 55	51	52		55, 56	55, 56				
Paul, Acts 13	17, 23	23, 33, 35		28		30, 33, 34 37				38	31
Epistle to the Hebrews 6	1	1–6	4	6		2		2	1, 6		

*The articles "communion of saints," "resurrection of the body," and "the life everlasting" are implied in those tabulated above. As "repentance" was a constant element in the preaching of the apostles, its absence from the Creed is thus explained. (From Blunt's "Theological Dictionary," altered.)

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